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STUDIES ON COMPULSORY EDUCATION—IV
COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN IRAQ

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COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN IRAQ

by VICTOR CLARK

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UNESCO

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3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

PREFACE

121 The present study on the Problem of *Compulsory Education in Iraq* is one of a series issued by Unesco in preparation for the 14th Conference on Public Education, organized jointly by Unesco and the International Bureau of Education in Geneva, in July 1951.

A major part of that conference is being devoted to the discussion of the problems of compulsory education, and it was thought that apart from the study conducted by the International Bureau of Education, based on a questionnaire sent to governments, Unesco would undertake six type-studies. Of these, three have been devoted to countries that have already achieved compulsory education, but whose method of execution differ one from the other: England as a country whose educational administration is decentralized; France as a country whose administration of education is centralized, and Australia as a country whose educational administration is decentralized on the federal, but centralized on the State level.

Another three type-studies have to do with countries that have reached different stages, leading to the achievement of compulsory education. For this purpose, one country in Latin America—Ecuador; in South East Asia—Thailand, and in the Middle East—Iraq, have been chosen.

In addition, two other studies have been undertaken; one a comparative study on the *Prolongation of Compulsory School Age* by Professor I. L. Kandel, and another on *Child Labour and Compulsory Education*, kindly being undertaken by the International Labour Office.

The present study on Iraq derives its main significance from the fact that it brings out very clearly the relation of compulsory education to other economic political and social factors, whether operating as agents, facilitating its realization, or putting obstacles in its way. The author has succeeded in sizing up the actual situation, of setting out the problem of land tenure, the poverty of the average farmer, tribal organization and various others factors which now impede the expansion of the primary school system. On the other hand, the great Arabic tradition and respect for learning and the impulse of the national movement

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

/21 are among the factors acting for the continuous expansion of primary education.

It is hoped that this study, along with the others, will help to bring out the most important points necessary for a realistic discussion of compulsory education problems.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

At the invitation of Unesco I visited Iraq during the autumn of 1950 to undertake a study of the problem of compulsory education. It was soon discovered, however, that although the terms of reference were relatively simple, the problem is enormous. Rapid educational progress in certain directions has been made since Iraq became an independent State, but there exist major economic, political and social problems which constitute serious obstacles to the promotion of compulsory education.

The study of the problems and the difficulties which need to be surmounted before realistic progress in the direction of compulsory education can be made was greatly assisted by the facilities which were provided in Iraq. Immediately on my arrival the Minister of Education stated that every assistance would be afforded by himself and his colleagues at the Ministry, that free access would be given to relevant reports and records, and that he had made arrangements for the Provincial Governors and Provincial Directors of Education to provide unrestricted means of visiting schools and seeing the conditions of the country.

With such generous facilities it proved possible to visit some 150 primary schools and a number of secondary schools and training institutions, in nine out of the fourteen provinces of Iraq. Visits were also paid to towns, villages, private homes, teachers' clubs, farms, irrigation projects, land settlement schemes and industrial and commercial concerns. A significant feature of these visits, and of the many discussions with teachers, Government officials, sheikhs, farmers, agricultural workers and others was the great courtesy, frankness and generous hospitality that was shown. Thanks to the assistance of so many friendly people it was possible to venture as far north as the provinces of Mosul, Erbil, Sulaimaniya and Kirkuk, to see much of the educational and social arrangements in Baghdad, and to travel through the southern provinces of Kut, Hilla, Amara and Basra. To see schools and meet people of all ranks in the mountains of Kurdistan, the northern desert and uplands, the great southern plain and the marshes of Amara was in itself an education, and provided realistic evidence

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

both of educational progress already made and the great obstacles which still have to be overcome.

While these visits were being made, a decision had to be taken as to the best means of using the limited time available. It seemed that the report on the study should take one of two forms. It could be a strictly limited account of the administrative action which would need to be taken to apply some measure of compulsory education in the fairly immediate future, together with detailed statistical data concerning towns and villages in each province in which the completion of primary school provision would enable compulsory education to be declared. This form of report was not, however, considered desirable for two reasons. First, it would have meant that, instead of visiting schools, seeing the general conditions of the country and meeting people representative of the different aspects of Iraqi life, most of the time would have had to be spent sitting at a desk in the provincial education offices and at the Ministry of Education itself. This is not the best means of attempting to feel the educational pulse of a country. Secondly, such a report was made a few years ago by the 'Ten-Year Plan Committee' referred to in the following pages. But little achievement in the direction of compulsory education arose from that most valuable report, mainly because certain major administrative reforms essential to its application were never carried out.

Consequently, it was decided that the study would probably be more valid, although more general, if it were based on the continuance of personal visits to schools and the other places indicated. It was felt that it would then be possible to consider prospects of compulsory education in the wider setting of the changes and developments that are taking place or need to take place. Administrative and other recommendations for practical action would have to be made, but these would arise from actual evidence and not from notions derived from the academic study of not entirely reliable statistics.

After many such visits up and down the country, during which impressions both of a general and particular nature were accumulated, it became clear that the report on the investigation could conveniently follow the sequence of a brief survey of the conditions of the country, an analysis of the educational needs of Iraq, an impression of the extent to which these needs are being met in the existing system, and an appreciation of the economic, political and social factors assisting or impeding educational advance. It soon became evident, however, that although there are many serious obstacles to the development of compulsory education, the study would be incomplete without reference to the significant

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ways in which some of these are being overcome. This suggested that there would be some value in then attempting to outline a policy of advance in the direction of compulsory education which would go hand in hand with the economic, political and social changes that are taking place. But although it proved possible to outline suggestions for such a policy of development, it also became abundantly clear that, until the major obstacle of the land tenure system can be overcome, ambitious progress towards compulsory education must continue to be frustrated.

So the study took the shape which appears in the following chapters. It would have been an impertinence to try to cover so much ground had it not been that the generous facilities given by the Minister of Education and the others already mentioned enabled me to use information, figures and opinion which have accumulated over a long period as a result of the efforts of people in the educational and other public services of Iraq. Nevertheless, although much of what is written in this study is a result of the thought and labours of others, any opinions expressed and conclusions drawn are, unless otherwise stated, my own responsibility. The same applies to the inevitable inaccuracies which are bound to be discovered by others who have long been associated with the educational affairs of Iraq. This acceptance of personal responsibility for opinions, conclusions and inaccuracies does, of course, draw attention to what may be regarded as a fundamental weakness in the whole study. Although every effort was made to undertake an objective enquiry, this cannot disguise the fact that the study is the work of an educational administrator whose knowledge of the Near and Middle East is limited and whose experience is based mainly on western systems.

At least two other defects or omissions are obvious. Firstly, in relation to a country where most of the adult population remains illiterate, suggestions for advance towards compulsory education cannot be dissociated from measures for combating general illiteracy. It will be seen that some reference is made both to the problem of adult illiteracy and to the need for associating day schools with realistic projects of fundamental education. Reference to this problem is only sketchy, partly because time pressed hard but mainly because, at the time of writing, a Unesco team is about to investigate materials and techniques for fundamental education in Iraq. Secondly, an account of the educational system beyond the primary stage is not given. This omission is deliberate—it is not necessary to duplicate the excellent information given by Dr. Matta Akrawi and Professor Roderic Matthews in their current book *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East.*

An attempt has been made to be reasonably frank. The

3r Clark S-6 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

Minister of Education requested that, although the study has been made on behalf of Unesco, and for consideration along with others at an international conference on compulsory education, he should be provided with a copy of the report for his own purposes. He added that it would be of little value to him unless it was completely frank.

Finally, thanks are expressed to the East Riding of Yorkshire Education Authority for giving me leave of absence to undertake the study, and to Unesco for affording the opportunity of seeing educational and other conditions in Iraq and something of the other Near and Middle East countries through which I passed. Experiences of this kind are most valuable to educational administrators both in widening their horizon and in enabling them to view their own problems in better perspective. They also help to promote personal friendships between people who live in different countries yet share common interests. This in itself helps in a simple yet human way to foster those educational and cultural purposes which it is part of the function of Unesco to assist.

VICTOR CLARK

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: The background 13

The country and the people 13
The development of primary education 15
The law and administration of primary education . 15
The present position of compulsory education . . . 16

CHAPTER TWO: The educational needs of Iraq 18

General educational needs 18
Special educational needs 19

CHAPTER THREE: The extent to which the needs are being met 21

Typical primary schools 21
The extent to which the needs are met quantitatively 22
The extent to which the needs are being met qualitatively 25

CHAPTER FOUR: Economic, political and social factors . . 29

Economic factors 29
Political and administrative factors 35
Social factors 37

CHAPTER FIVE: Significant recent and contemporary advance in Iraq 42

Economic and social advance favourable to educational development 42
Significant educational advances 46
The advance of educational initiative in the provinces 50

CHAPTER SIX: A policy of advance towards compulsory education in Iraq 53

A short-term policy 55

Coping with existing demands 55
Reform of the central administration 56
The creation of local education authorities 59
The financing of the new educational arrangements 60
The declaration of compulsory education areas . . . 62
The establishment of a pilot project in tribal education 63

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

A long-term policy 64
Improving the quality of the teacher 64
Improving the quality of primary schooling 66
An approach to a new structure of primary education 67
Development schemes in preparation for ultimate large-scale provision of compulsory education . . . 69

Summary of suggested policy 70
Short-term policy 70
Long-term policy 72

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

CHAPTER ONE

THE BACKGROUND

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

An appreciation of the present state of education in Iraq and the possibility of advance towards the goal of compulsory education is not possible without some reference to the history and present circumstances of the country.

Following centuries during which a brilliant civilization flourished, particularly during the Abbasid period, the country remained under Ottoman domination from the middle of the sixteenth century until the first world war. British interest in the port of Basra and the development of the oilfields caused the people to fear a continuance of alien domination but, after an uneasy mandate, the country now known as Iraq emerged in 1932 as an independent nation with membership of the League of Nations. The long period of Ottoman domination with an administration centred in a distant capital left its mark. Administrative reforms and some social advance were attempted during the period of the mandate. When, however, Iraq became an independent State its Government was faced with a legacy of ignorance, poverty and disease among all but a very small minority of the population. Attempts have been made by successive Governments to liquidate the effects of this legacy and, in certain directions, rapid and significant progress has been made. But economic, social and political problems of great magnitude remain, all of which have their effect on educational progress or retardation.

Under its constitution the country enjoys a democratic form of government with a limited monarchy and a cabinet responsible to parliament. Despite the rapid educational advance of recent years, the majority of the people are illiterate, and effective participation in the government of the country must inevitably be confined to a few.

Iraq covers some 175,000 square miles, mainly of alluvial plain stretching from the Persian Gulf through the central uplands to the mountains of Turkish Kurdistan and from the Arabian and Syrian deserts to Persia. Apart from the four principal towns of Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and Kirkuk, together with a number of

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

smaller urban and semi-urban communities, the country is essentially rural and dependent upon agriculture. There are, it is estimated, some 35,000 square miles of cultivable land, only twenty per cent of which is cropped in any one year. The country is watered by the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, and is amenable to great irrigational projects. Some large-scale and subsidiary irrigation schemes have been developed and others are under way. Until capital is available, however, to bring much more water to much more land, large areas of potentially arable and pasture land will continue in a state of unexploited fertility.

With the exception of a minority who dwell in the towns and smaller urban communities, the population is sparse and much of it mobile. Out of a total population of some 5,000,000 roughly twenty-two per cent live in urban areas, forty per cent in settled rural communities, thirty per cent in semi-settled rural areas, and eight per cent are nomadic.

The educational and other social problems and needs of the country can only be appreciated if it is realized that Iraq is predominantly rural in character and modes of life and, minor industries and developing oil projects apart, is dependent upon agriculture for its existence. There is a certain amount of industrial activity connected with drink, tobacco, soap, vegetable oils, foot-wear, bricks and a few cotton ginneries, but, generally speaking, the industrial capacity remains undeveloped. Oil output, however, is rapidly increasing, and the royalties from this industry have already made a valuable contribution to badly needed capital works.

Racially, the inhabitants may be roughly divided into seventy-seven per cent Arabs, seventeen per cent Kurds, three per cent Jews, the remainder being Turcomans, Yazidis and Assyrians. The number of Jews has, however, decreased by recent emigration into Palestine. The inhabitants may be further divided into distinctive religious groups, ninety-three per cent being Muslims, three per cent Jews, slightly less than three per cent Christians, the remainder being of miscellaneous faiths. Despite these marked religious differences, a feature of the public educational system of Iraq is its great religious toleration.

Generally speaking, although the inhabitants are distributed into distinctive racial and religious groups, they seem to share some important characteristics which, to the educator, are hopeful and significant. A visitor to the country cannot but be impressed with the great natural courtesy, friendliness and open-hearted hospitality invariably shown by people of all ranks and groups. In addition to these socially valuable characteristics, many of the people exhibit a quickness of response which, in those who have passed

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

through institutions of higher education, seems to develop into an extraordinary mental agility. Those who are politically articulate share a high concern for the future of Iraq as a nation.

A visitor to the country is also struck by a number of contradictions. Iraq has a brilliant cultural inheritance, yet the bulk of the population is illiterate. It is a country of great economic possibilities, yet the majority of the people exist at a meagre standard of life. The soil is of high fertility, yet it continues to be farmed by primitive methods. Above all, although the future prosperity of the country depends upon the application of science and power to the land, agricultural development is inhibited by a most unsatisfactory system of land tenure.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education on any large scale in Iraq is of recent growth. It began with the traditional Arabic mullah school, in which small groups of boys under the direction of a religious teacher memorized religious lore in a monotonous and repetitive manner. Traces of this verbal technique are still obvious in many of the primary schools.

Under the Ottoman régime the nucleus of a schools system was introduced, and it is said that by 1913 there were some 6,000 children attending primary schools of a sort. Soon after the next military conquest the British promoted some further educational development and, in particular, substituted Arabic instead of the alien Turkish language as the medium of instruction. By 1921 there were reputed to be more than 15,000 children attending public primary schools.

It is significant, however, that no real approach to a system of public primary schooling was made until the nation took its educational affairs into its own hands. Since the meeting of the first Iraqi Parliament in 1925 a real impetus appears to have been given to the development of primary education. By 1931 there existed 316 public primary schools with an enrolment of some 35,000 pupils. By 1950 extraordinary quantitative progress had been made, for by that year 175,000 children were enrolled in over 1,000 public primary schools.

THE LAW AND ADMINISTRATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

By 1940 the development of primary education, and of higher education, had gone on at such a pace that it was necessary to

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

embody previous legislation and regulations into the General Education Law of 1940. Under this law it was directed that 'The Ministry of Education shall undertake to create a nation sound in body and mind and character'. So far as primary education was concerned it was provided that it should be free, that the age of admission to the primary school should not be less than six and that the period should be six years. It was also decreed that 'Primary education shall be obligatory and shall be carried out in the districts assigned by the Ministry of Education when necessary facilities are available. Pupils' guardians infringing this Article shall be liable to a fine not exceeding three dinars'.

By this time the administration of education had been highly systematized and it remains so in the hands of the Ministry of Education centred in Baghdad. A feature of this administration is its very high degree of centralization, with the Ministry of Education controlling and supervising the most minute details both of curricula and expenditure. The Minister of Education himself appears to exercise a greater control of detail than in other countries. Under the Minister primary education is directed by a Director-General of Primary Education. In each of the fourteen provinces of Iraq there is a Provincial Director of Education who is, in reality, the agent of the Ministry of Education, and is in no sense a local official responsible to a local authority.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Although legal provision for compulsory primary education was made in the General Education Law of 1940, as a reality it does not exist in any part of Iraq. Over the whole of the country out of an estimated total of 750,000 children of primary school age, not more than 175,000 attend primary schools.

Shortly after the passing of the General Education Law of 1940 an attempt was made to apply its compulsory primary education provisions in two of the provinces. Apparently, however, the declaration of compulsory education in these two provinces failed in its object. The main reasons for this failure were the poverty of the majority of the parents who were unable to dispense with the labour of their children on the land, the mobility of part of the population which was still in a semi-nomadic state, and the inability to persuade teachers to live in remote villages where housing facilities and other amenities are most inadequate. It is also stated that, these economic and social reasons apart, other factors such as the unwillingness of the local courts to inflict the legal penalties for non-attendance and the active opposition of

3/ Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

powerful local landowners operated as effective obstacles to compulsory schooling.

Despite this initial failure of a modest attempt to apply compulsory education in certain parts of the country, enlightened opinion in Iraq is strongly in favour of educational development. Because of the economic, political and social obstacles which will have to be overcome before a real approach to universal compulsory education can be made, few if any of the country's educators feel that this desirable objective is likely to be achieved in a short time. As educators, however, and for educational reasons, they are anxious that the practicability of achieving a realistic approach towards compulsory education should be soberly investigated. This enlightened minority are likely to be assisted in their demands by pressure of nationalist opinion, which sees in the development of education a means of spreading national culture and national sentiments among the people.

There are other important reasons why the time is ripe for assessing the ways and means by which compulsory education can be approached. Although Iraq, like many other countries is, economically, passing through a difficult stage, rapid development in thought and ways of life is taking place. The country is at present at the cross-roads between traditional and modern or western civilization. Change and development, in one direction or another, seem to be the order of the day. It is for this reason that a contemporary Iraqi educator urges that the present time 'affords a unique opportunity for making a good start in education'.

Before, however, considering the practicability of making a 'good start' or at any rate a new start in the direction of compulsory education, consideration must be given to the educational needs of the country at its present stage of development and the extent to which these needs are being met by the existing system. It will then be possible to consider, in the light of prevailing economic, political and social conditions, ways and means of achieving further advance.

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MHI Iraq MHI

CHAPTER TWO

THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF IRAQ

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The Needs of the Individual Child. The young Iraqi, like his brothers and sisters the world over, needs that assistance to develop those elementary skills, aptitudes and habits which can only come through participation in the life of a good school. He needs mastery of the written and spoken language of his own country, arithmetic, knowledge of his country's geography and history in relation to the outside world, an understanding of the elementary rules of health and social conduct, and opportunity to practise art and handicraft. In addition he needs facilities in school, if his parents wish it, for religious education.

The Needs of Society. These are the fundamental educational needs of all children, irrespective of their habitat. Each country, however, according to its peculiar circumstances and stage of growth, needs to develop its system of education with due emphasis on its particular requirements. In other words, the universal educational needs of all children have to be conditioned by the needs of the society in which they live. At the present time Iraqi society has four main educational needs. The first is the need for sound character training, including a realization that education is not simply a collection of skills and aids in preparation for a Government or clerical job, but the acquisition of sound values which need to be applied in all walks of life whether professional or manual. The second important need is a knowledge of the practice and principles of good husbandry by those who work on the land. An equally important requirement in a minority of the population is the acquisition of technical skills necessary in local industries and in the growing demand for maintenance work. Finally, as is to be expected in a young country which is still engaged in the process of welding diverse racial and religious groups into conscious nationhood, it is considered that one of the most important needs is the promotion of knowledge and qualities necessary to the furtherance of national unity.

Some of these qualities and skills can only be obtained at

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

higher levels of education but, in general, the basis for most of them is acquired in the primary school. Before considering, therefore, ways and means of advance towards compulsory primary education for all children, it will be desirable to ascertain to what extent these general educational needs are met in the existing primary schools system. If it should be found that the primary schools do not adequately meet these needs, it may be wise to advocate qualitative reform in primary schooling before ambitious quantitative advance.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In addition to these general educational needs, and partly arising from them, there are two outstanding needs which are connected with the economy of the country and the transitional stage through which an important section of the population is passing.

The Need for Realistic Rural Education. The first outstanding need is that of realistic rural education. In a country whose future development and prosperity is so bound up with the necessity for agricultural improvement, it is important that the schools of the countryside should relate their activities to rural pursuits. As the following extract from the report of the Monroe Commission, issued in 1932, indicates, there is nothing novel in directing attention to this vital educational requirement in Iraq:

> Agriculture as a science is comparatively recent. As a science it has not yet entered Iraq to any great extent. Here it is still predominantly a rude craft; most of those who live by agriculture use primitive methods of farming and stock-keeping of generations or centuries ago. If these out-worn methods are to be replaced by better ones the change must be worked through education, and largely through the village school. . . .
>
> If the work of the village schools is to be determined by the actual and present needs of the people they are set up to serve, then they should first of all become a means of teaching the people how to make a better living from the land. The village school should provide more vital instruction and training in improved agricultural methods; manual arts; the importance of native industries; the proper breeding and selection of seeds. . . .

With certain modifications, due mainly to the efforts of the Directorate of Agriculture, these observations of the Monroe Commission are as valid in 1950 as they were in 1932. They will need to be taken into account at a later stage of this study when the type of advance towards compulsory education in the countryside is being considered.

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

871
369

The Need for Realistic Tribal Education. Apart from this great need for the right type of village school for the forty per cent of the population who are living in settled rural communities, there should be educational provision related to the special needs of the thirty-eight per cent of the population living under semi-settled or nomadic conditions and participating in a partial or fully tribal life.

Here again attention was drawn to this important educational need by the Monroe Commission which stated that 'practically all tribal members are illiterate with the exception of some sheikhs who were sent early in their lives to towns or had a special mullah or sayyid, who lived with the tribe, to teach them reading the Koran and writing'. Again with certain modifications, due to the efforts of a minority of tribal heads who have provided their own school buildings, the comments of the Monroe Commission apply equally to conditions in 1950.

[212]

The Monroe Commission, mainly on the advice of an Iraqi educator who had made a special study of the educational needs of tribal adults and children, stressed the great importance of both preventive and constructive education for tribal dwellers during the difficult period of transition from the nomadic to the more settled agricultural life. They advocated novel educational devices to meet these special educational needs, including the provision of peripatetic teachers-cum-social advisers who would ultimately promote realistic rural schools which would provide primary education for the children and simple community centres for the adults.

These then, are the general and the outstanding educational needs of Iraq. It is now necessary, in so far as these relate to children of primary school age, to enquire to what extent they are being met in the existing primary schools system, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

CHAPTER THREE

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE NEEDS ARE BEING MET

TYPICAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Before attempting to draw general conclusions as to the extent to which the educational needs indicated in the previous chapter are being met, it may be useful to give a general picture of typical primary schools in Iraq. To speak of a 'typical' school is, of course, misleading, for every school has or should have its individual character. In general, however, most of the Iraqi primary schools have certain common characteristics which make it possible to venture a description of types.

A Typical Town Primary School. In each of the provincial capitals and most of the smaller towns are to be found large schools which may provide for between 300 and 500 pupils. The great majority of the urban primary schools are single sex schools. Such a school may have from ten to twelve rooms of varying sizes. The numbers in each class may vary from sixty to thirty, the smaller usually being the sixth or top class. The class-rooms are frequently overcrowded, with sometimes three children sitting on a desk built for two. Lighting and sanitary arrangements are generally not of a high standard. In some schools where available accommodation has not kept pace with the local demand for primary education, there may be as many as seventy children in one of the lower classes. Desks are not well constructed and generally show lack of maintenance.

In such a school, as in every other full-range primary school, there are six grades of class, the children being promoted from class to class each year provided they pass an examination indicating that they have satisfied the requirements of the centrally prescribed programme of studies. Those who do not pass the promotion examination are required to repeat the previous year's work.

The teachers seem to work very hard, they occupy the centre of the stage and either lecture to their pupils or follow the common technique of verbal question and answer. There is little activity on the part of the children apart from incredibly quick oral

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

response, and there is not much evidence of handicraft or art. Outdoor physical education follows the prescribed syllabus which, however, seems to be more modern in technique than some of the other subjects.

Generally speaking, the older buildings look as depressing as their counterparts in some of the western countries. Unfortunately there are not many very recent buildings.

While these conditions apply to many of the schools, however, in the larger towns there are some noteworthy exceptions to which reference will be made later.

A Typical Village School. A village school may consist of two or three rooms housing from twenty to seventy pupils of both sexes, but it is rarely a complete six-class school. Lighting and sanitation are usually inferior to that of the town schools. In the northern provinces some of the schools are built of stone, but mostly they are made of dried mud bricks. In parts of the south, especially in the marsh districts, the buildings are reed huts.

The curriculum and teaching techniques in the village school are identical with those of the town school. The children rarely enjoy activity methods, and sit in their desks most of the time.

In many of the village schools children cannot complete their full period of primary schooling because the numbers are too small to permit the organization of the full six classes. In a minority of these schools, however, an increasing number of teachers are learning the technique of simultaneously teaching more than one attainment group and are thus able to provide a complete primary school course in an incomplete school.

Most of the village schools have no garden, handicraft or livestock. But the newly established agricultural primary schools, to which detailed reference will be made later, provide exceptions to this rule.

Because of the absence of compulsory school attendance and the consequent late admission to school of a number of pupils, there is a great variety of age-range in both urban and village schools. Within the limits of the curriculum, however, the teachers meet these difficulties with commendable patience, and both the older and the younger children in any one class are usually a happy family. Another happy feature of the Iraqi primary school is the absence of social distinctions within the class-room. A wealthy sheikh's son may rub shoulders with a poorly clad lad from a very humble home.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE NEEDS ARE MET QUANTITATIVELY

The Rapid Growth of the Primary Schools System. As will have been

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

872

gathered from the above inevitably over-simplified account of typical primary schools, while some of the educational needs of the children and of society are met, others are neglected. This is due to the very rapid growth of a primary schools system in a new country faced with the task of promoting educational development almost from scratch and with limited financial resources.

The following table, which represents an extraordinary tribute both to the public demand for primary education and to the efforts of the Ministry of Education to meet this demand over a comparatively short period, illustrates the rapid extension of primary schooling between 1920 and 1949:

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN IRAQ

Year	No. of schools		No. of enrolments				No. of teachers	
			Government		Private			
	Government	Private	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Government	Private
1920–21	88	—	—	—	—	—	485	—
1930–31	316	—	27467	7046	—	—	1325	—
1938–39	739	—	69505	27115	—	—	3149	—
1939–40	713	73	64240	25242	13872	6083	3304	577
1940–41	735	76	64112	26682	13386	6161	3525	608
1941–42	761	77	62441	26423	12823	6299	3752	591
1942–43	788	77	61697	25748	10997	7008	3979	532
1943–44	861	80	67297	22261	12256	6642	4340	607
1944–45	902	81	76960	24017	12828	7059	4491	607
1945–46	944	83	90419	28068	13693	7977	4779	650
1946–47	967	90	98540	30225	14136	7718	4970	657
1947–48	1016	90	106904	32350	15318	7808	5417	779
1948–49	1044	106	114669	35145	16998	8062	5733	776

By the end of the year 1949, therefore, some 175,000 children were enrolled in primary schools. It is estimated that the total number of children of primary school age in Iraq is 750,000. Thus, discounting the rising population, schools and teachers for another 575,000 children would have to be provided before universal compulsory primary education could be achieved.

Wastage in the Primary School. While, however, the figures quoted in the preceding table represent considerable quantitative progress, they do not show the important fact that the great majority of children who enter the primary school fail to complete the full course, and that many do not receive more than one, two or

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

872 three years of primary schooling. Attention was directed to this striking educational phenomenon by a prominent Iraqi educator in 1942, in the following words:

> Iraq has not yet reached the stage where a compulsory education law is practicable. There are therefore no legal provisions that compel parents to send their children to school within specified age limits. Hence not only do the majority of children of school age enter no primary school, but of those who enter only a fraction remain to complete their primary education. The rest drop out of school at any point from the first to the sixth grade. This constitutes one of the major problems of primary education in Iraq and involves the waste of a great deal of money and effort.

More recent figures provided by another competent Iraqi educational researcher indicate that out of some 22,000 pupils who enrolled in the first classes of primary schools in the year 1940–41, some 16,000 reached the second class, 14,000 the third class, with numbers continuing to dwindle until 10,000 entered the sixth class. Of the 10,000 who stayed on at school until their last year, less than half officially completed the primary school course by gaining the primary school-leaving certificate in the year 1946.

This elimination of pupils, grade by grade, in the primary school represents a serious defect in the present system. There are several contributory reasons. One is obviously economic, parents in poor financial circumstances find that they cannot afford to dispense with the labour of their children. Other reasons for this [876] dropping out of school are the disillusionment of parents who find that their children cannot surmount the repeated examination hurdles, and the fact that some of the village schools are incomplete. But perhaps a more significant reason, at any rate in the villages, is that it is felt, perhaps unconsciously, that the somewhat over-academic and excessively oral type of education is not sufficiently related to the future life of pupils, whose livelihood depends not so much upon bookishness as upon things more practical and related to real life situations. It is clear, however, that until compulsory education can be applied and enforced, the educational life of the minority who do attend primary schools is likely to be short and incomplete.

Demands that are not being met. Despite the rapid growth both in the number of schools and in the number of children attending them, and although this great quantitative increase is badly offset by the number of children who do not complete the course, there can be no doubt that there is a public demand for more primary

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

schools and that this demand is either inadequately met or not being met at all. 872

In Baghdad and the other large towns a number of primary school buildings have to be used on a double-shift basis because the demand for education exceeds existing school accommodation. In province after province the Directors of Education quote instances where children have had to be turned away from school because there is no room for them. In travelling through the majority of the provinces the writer met several sheikhs and other local notables who maintained that they were prepared to provide school premises if the Ministry of Education could supply the teaching staff.

So far as tribal education is concerned, the position remains generally as was described by the Monroe Commission. As an example, the Shammar tribe with a population of roughly 60,000 has no school of any kind.

The conclusion must be drawn, therefore, that although the numbers of primary schools and the children attending them have grown considerably during the last thirty years, and despite the fact that many children do not stay the whole course, quantitatively the existing public demand for primary education is not being met. It is now necessary to enquire to what extent the educational needs of the children and of the country are being met qualitatively.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE NEEDS ARE BEING MET QUALITATIVELY

An Impression of 150 Primary Schools. During the course of this investigation visits were paid to some 150 primary schools, to a smaller number of secondary schools and to most of the institutions of teacher training. It is never safe to judge the quality of any school by a brief acquaintance but, for what they are worth, the following impressions are noted.

In practically every school visited a noteworthy feature was the energy which the teachers, especially the younger ones, put into their work. They seem to teach incessantly and with little in the way of breaks. The women especially have a great sense of vocation, and are unsparing in their efforts on behalf of their pupils. In many of the girls' schools the teachers had adopted all sorts of devices to provide neat and tidy uniforms for their children. Practically all the teachers appear to spend more time marking and correcting exercises than do their colleagues in some of the western countries. These qualities were apparent throughout the provinces, and are particularly commendable in the villages, 872 875

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

where many of the teachers maintain their educational faith despite the fact that they are by no means over-paid and have to live under poor domestic conditions with few amenities.

On the other hand, the general impression gained was that the curriculum of the primary school is seriously overloaded on the bookish and verbal side. This is confirmed by a glance at the official Programme of Studies for the primary schools:

Subject	Periods per week					
	1st Class	2nd Class	3rd Class	4th Class	5th Class	6th Class
Religion and Koran . .	4	4	3	3	2	2
Arabic	11	12	10	10	6	6
English	—	—	—	—	6	6
Arithmetic	6	6	6	6	5	5
Object lesson and hygiene	2	2	2	2	2	2
Geography and history	—	—	4	4	4	4
Morals and Civics . .	—	—	—	1	1	1
Drawing and handicraft	3	3	4	4	4	4
Physical education and singing	4	3	3	2	2	2

This programme, although it looks somewhat scholarly for young children is not, when one examines it in full detail as published by the Ministry of Education, illiberal. It does not, however, allow for much for experiment and flexibility in relation to the varying needs of growing children. The programme of studies is interpreted very literally and the method of learning is by class lectures and memorization. There is little in the way of active learning on the part of the pupils, and they do not appear to have opportunities of acquiring a sense of individual responsibility through the exercise of their own initiative.

One distinctive feature is the teaching of English by a very modern 'direct method' technique. But this, by its excellence, affords a striking contrast to the teaching of some of the other subjects. Although drawing and handicraft are included in the programme of studies, these subjects are mainly limited to copying designs or simple models, and the pupils gain very little experience in the use of tools.

It would obviously be unfair, after fleeting visits to a number of schools, to venture criticism of this kind, were it not for the fact that stronger objections to the over-academic conduct of most

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

of the primary schools are sometimes made both by officers of the Ministry of Education and by the teachers themselves. The result seems to be a vicious circle, however, because while the teachers blame the centrally imposed programme of studies, the officers of the Ministry maintain that it is not the programme but the narrow interpretation of it by the teachers which is the trouble.

Reasons for the Existing Quality of Primary Schooling. Although there is much to praise in the conscientiousness and zeal of the primary school teachers, and a good deal to be said against the existing overloaded, excessively oral and bookish curriculum, such deficiencies as exist in the quality of primary schooling are understandable when one recalls the very rapid growth of primary education in Iraq from such limited beginnings over a short period.

With such rapid expansion one of the main tasks of the Ministry of Education has had to be that of providing the maximum number of teachers in the minimum of time. And, necessary though this rapid production of more or less trained teachers has been, the consequent training devices have not been calculated to produce the best teachers.

It is estimated that the output of teachers from training institutions during the present year will be 754 men and women. This represents a considerable achievement and, numerically, is one of which the Ministry of Education has reason to be proud. Enquiry into the educational background of these trainees, however, reveals that nearly half of them did not have the advantage of a full secondary education before they entered training institutions. The majority of those who did complete their secondary education before they took up training are simply undergoing an attenuated one-year training course attached to a secondary school. It will be appreciated, therefore, that much needs to be done both in ensuring a sounder educational background for teacher trainees and in providing a longer period of really professional training before the schools can be served by teachers of the quality they need.

It is perhaps not within the scope of this study to evaluate teacher training methods in Iraq in any detail. Yet there are still other inadequacies which need to be met if the quality of primary education is to be improved along the right lines. This applies especially to subjects such as handicraft and to the proper training of teachers for rural schools. With one or two exceptions, little in the way of vigorous and realistic handicraft is practised in the teacher training institutions.

There have been rural teacher training colleges, but these have had a chequered history and the two that still continue have little

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

875 in the way of land for practical agriculture and very limited facilities for the actual practice of handicrafts. The type of village school envisaged by the Monroe Commission, and which is so badly needed in rural Iraq, is never likely to materialize until teacher training is directed to turning out the right type of teacher for such schools.

872 In concluding these observations upon the extent to which the educational needs of the children of Iraq are being met in the existing primary schools system, therefore, it is fair to say that although great quantitative progress has been achieved during the last thirty years, existing needs are not being adequately met. Further, public pressure for primary education exceeds existing provision. Qualitatively, advance is desirable in the direction of a more realistic curriculum, especially in the rural areas. The time is undoubtedly ripe for a vigorous policy of educational advance. Such an advance, however, is bound up with problems related to the economic, political and social life of the country. It is these which must now be considered.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

CHAPTER FOUR

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS

As was suggested in the previous chapter, although a long road will have to be traversed before the ideal of universal compulsory primary education can be achieved in Iraq, the time is ripe for further advance towards that objective. Pressure on existing school accommodation in the urban areas is acute, most of the villages are without schools, and large areas lack primary school provision of any kind. Yet quantitative advance has by no means been halted, and although many more children would be attending school at the present time if there were schools and teachers for them, new schools are being opened both in new buildings and in rented premises.

The Ministry of Education and all who have a concern for education in Iraq are well aware of these circumstances. A small minority feel that quantitative advance has gone far enough for the present and advocate that, before further large-scale development takes place, existing qualitative deficiencies in primary education should be put right. This will take time. In the meantime, it would be difficult to refuse to provide primary school places for the many who are clamouring for them.

While, however, thinking educators in Iraq wish for further advance in the direction of compulsory education, they know that this ideal can never be realized until serious economic, political and social obstacles which impede educational and other desirable social development can be overcome. As the Minister of Education in office at the time of writing put it: 'An emotional desire for more and better schools is not in itself sufficient. Sensible educational development can only take place if it is related to our current economic and financial problems.'

ECONOMIC FACTORS

The Financing of Education. The first of these problems is finance. Little is to be gained from considering proposals for further advance unless they are accompanied by a realistic understanding as to how and where the money for them is to be found. The extent to

Jr Clark 5-5 (1960) 1961 MH1 Iraq MH1

659 which the Government have been prepared to find money for education is shown by the following table of national educational expenditure compared with total budget expenditure:

[65a] EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

Year	*For all purposes*	*For all education*	*Per cent of education to all purposes*
	£	£	
1920–21	5,556,574	130,360	2.35
1930–31	3,994,337	294,262	7.37
1938–39	5,469,813	708,056	12.94
1939–40	6,369,148	810,477	12.72
1940–41	7,144,910	848,168	11.87
1941–42	7,701,178	855,540	11.11
1942–43	10,620,822	1,131,414	10.65
1943–44	13,749,321	1,515,542	11.02
1944–45	15,484,752	1,335,475	8.62
1945–46	17,563,230	1,611,843	9.18
1946–47	18,428,567	1,737,604	9.43
1947–48	18,742,657	2,157,315	11.51
1948–49	21,947,994	2,572,625	11.72
1949–50	24,095,300	3,783,309	15.70

When one attempts to compare present national expenditure on education with what it would cost to finance compulsory education for all children, however, it cannot be suggested with even the most realistic optimism that there is much prospect of the money being available for some time to come. It is estimated that, at the present time, the cost of providing primary education is £8 per pupil per year. Thus the cost of providing compulsory primary education for the 750,000 children of primary school age, even at the existing level, would amount to considerably more than £6,000,000 per annum, i.e., probably twice as much as the total current educational budget. And this estimate does not take into account the cost of providing the new schools, of bringing existing school buildings up to better standards and of training the many more teachers who would be necessary. It also ignores the fact of the rapidly growing school population.

For this reason many responsible educators, when confronted with the cost, feel that no serious advance in the direction of compulsory education can be contemplated. This may or may not be true. There is always a need for financial realism, but there

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

may be danger in holding up consideration of radical educational reforms until all the necessary financial provision is within sight. Those who wish for advance towards compulsory education but who are fearful of the consequent financial commitments could well be reminded that experience in some other countries has shown that, when the desire for educational advance really exists, the money necessary for its realization is likely to be forthcoming. Indeed, it is quite possible that in Iraq there exist monies which could be made available for educational purposes if means could be devised of extracting them into the public purse. This view may be the more valid when it is remembered that public education in Iraq is financed almost entirely from the central Government budget and that primary education, which is essentially a local service, makes little demand on local financial resources. More will be said later about the possibility of augmenting existing educational revenues from local sources.

Apart from the possibility of raising local revenue for educational purposes, before educational and other social services can be greatly extended, there will need to be larger contributions from the national budget. Some consideration must, therefore, be given to the wider question of the practicability of increasing the country's taxable wealth from which more money for public services may be derived. This inevitably leads to some discussion of two other important economic problems, the potential revenue capacity of the country and the related problem of land tenure.

The Potential Revenue Capacity of the Country. It is beyond the scope of this particular study to attempt to assess the potential revenue capacity of Iraq. This is a matter for fiscal experts. Some of the more authoritative of these maintain that the task of considerably augmenting the budget so that additional monies could be devoted to educational and other social services is not insuperable. They feel that, although in the early years of the creation of Iraq as an independent State the Government might not have felt itself sufficiently strong to make too many taxation demands, it is now able to do so. They suggest that it is now possible both to tighten up existing fiscal arrangements and also to obtain more revenue by increased or new taxes. These financial experts hold the view that, despite minor fiscal reforms in recent years, the taxation system remains traditional and too rigid and that effective attempts have not been made to increase revenue by bringing taxation into line with higher prices and the changed economic conditions of the post-war period.

One fiscal change advocated by these would-be revenue reformers is that income tax, which is practically confined to

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

651 Government officials whose incomes are known and to a minority of the merchants, should be extended to other forms of income, and that provision should also be made for an inheritance tax. There can be no doubt that, if income tax were extended to other forms of income, a wealthy section of the community who at present derive large incomes from land ownership and other sources would contribute much more than they do at present to the national revenue. Another suggestion put forward is that customs and excise duties should be adjusted to *ad valorem* rates to bring them more into accord with post-war prices. They also recommend that the consumption or sales tax, which is at present a fixed rate of 12.5 per cent on produce sold, should be replaced by a form of sliding scale tax related both to land values and to the use made of land. In advocating this important change the reformers maintain that this would produce more revenue, would prevent existing evasions and would also serve as an incentive to increased agricultural production.

It is not within the competence of the writer to comment on the validity or practicability of revenue reforms of this kind. It is clear, however, that there is a fertile field for intelligent enquiry into methods for producing that additional budget revenue without which educational and other advance will be slower than is desirable.

311 *The Problem of Land Tenure.* While it is possible that measures such as those indicated would produce valuable additions to the national revenue, the fact remains that the main source of Iraq's future wealth must be the proper exploitation of the land. Upon this depends that higher standard of life for the bulk of the population, and the concomitant increase of wealth for both private and public use, without which the country will never be able to enjoy that abundant life which the rich natural agricultural resources of Iraq make possible. Unfortunately the country's enormous agricultural potential is greatly hindered by the system of land tenure.

423 The land tenure system of Iraq is far too complicated a subject fully to be examined in this study, but the following extract from Sir Ernest Dowson's classic report on this problem gives some idea of its effects and ramifications:

> The injurious effect of the existing welter of uncertainty and dispute upon both the agricultural prosperity of the country and public order can hardly be exaggerated. Every one directly or indirectly concerned with agriculture in Iraq must know many individual cases in which the development and use of the land has been gravely obstructed by the widespread insecurity

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

and confusion of rights. Indeed the most diligent inquiry would be unlikely to reveal anywhere any appreciable number of holdings, small or large, held in undisputed possession and free from hampering and conflicting claims. It needs no great effort of the imagination to appreciate the blighting effect of these unhappy conditions prevailing throughout the country, upon the prosperity of the main national industry and the welfare and contentment of the people as a whole.

Put very briefly, with the exception of small areas, mainly in Northern Iraq, together with some smaller areas of a few yet hopefully significant State-sponsored schemes of land settlement, the bulk of the cultivated land of Iraq is in the possession of large landowners. Some of them may not enjoy the holding of this land by confirmed legal right but, to all intents and purposes, they own it and derive immense incomes from it. Others, by legal process, the validity of which is disputed by land reformers, have gained possession of lands which were formerly held in common tribal use.

These landowners, or landholders, are usually sheikhs or absentee urban landlords who let the land to share-tenants through a hierarchy of lessees or agents, at the bottom of which is the landless cultivator who gets an incredibly small share of the produce of his labour. Indeed, the actual cultivator under this invidious system of share-cropping may get anything from ten per cent to thirty per cent of the produce of the land which he works, most of the remainder going to the large landowners, agents or owners of irrigation pumps. The situation may vary from landlord to landlord, and very occasionally the actual cultivator is said to share fifty per cent of the produce. In general, however, the position of the Iraqi countryside is one of great extremes of wealth and poverty. The landowner may live in a sumptuous style with a town house and country palace, while the peasant cultivator may live under conditions of poverty or near-destitution.

It is not possible in this study to attempt more than an outline of the causes and effects of this situation. It arose partly out of ancient confusion of titles which meant that, with the break-up of the tribal system, the most powerful member of the tribe was able to appropriate for his own purposes land which was originally intended for the common good of the tribe. It is due partly to the faulty application of the Ottoman Land Code under which, because the small cultivator was not strong enough to establish his rights of title, these rights fell to the sheikh. The profits derived from the Persian Gulf grain trade in the late 19th and early 20th centuries gave a further impetus to what has been described as 'this wholesale land grabbing'. Finally, with the development

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

#71 #23 #25 [565] of modern pump irrigation, both landowners and urban speculators were able as pump providers to secure further advantages over the small peasant cultivator. The outcome of this combination of cupidity and circumstance is such that an experienced investigator into the land problems of the Near and Middle East maintains that 'the bulk of the land has come into the hands of a class from whom no leadership in agricultural methods can be expected and which is tyrannous, callous and oppressive'. This generalization is, however, not entirely just, for a minority of the landowners appear to take a greater interest in the welfare of their tenants than might be assumed. But, with few exceptions, the share-cropping peasant cultivator of Iraq lives a hard life of poverty which is only mitigated by ignorance of better conditions.

It is necessary that this problem of land tenure and its effects on the economic and social life of the country should be fully appreciated, and this for three vital reasons.

433 Firstly, the land is the main source of the future wealth of Iraq, and consequently of revenue for educational and other social purposes. There are, of course, those other possible sources of increased revenue indicated earlier in this chapter and, as will be suggested later, it is to be expected that the steadily increasing royalties from oil exploitation will contribute to the country's resources for social progress. But it must be reiterated that the most important source of national wealth in Iraq is the land.

241 Secondly, although improved methods of agriculture and of the organization of rural life are badly needed, these are hardly likely to be promoted by landowners who are interested in the *status quo*.

The agricultural productivity of 'the land between the two rivers', once renowned for its robust fertility and abundant crops, has fallen to an extraordinarily low level. The superficial causes of this lamentable state of affairs are primitive methods of husbandry, the lack of application of power and science to the land, insufficiency of irrigational facilities and the misuse of those that exist. Until improved methods of cultivation, stock rearing, harvesting and marketing, accompanied by a sound system of agricultural education both in the schools and at the adult level are applied, there can be little prospect of the land of Iraq being that rich source of wealth through which the people may live more abundantly. These improvements, however, are not likely to materialize under the existing land tenure system.

511 642 Thirdly, there can be little expectation that Iraq, constitutionally a democratic country, will develop effective democratic institutions, both centrally and locally, so long as the standards of the bulk of the population remain at so low a level.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MHI Iraq MHI

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS

POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS

Although the main obstacle to further educational development in Iraq is that of finance, and although it is difficult to see how sufficient money will be forthcoming for this and other social purposes until fiscal and land reforms are undertaken, there exist other obstacles to educational progress which are more of a political and administrative nature.

Lack of Continuity in Educational Policy. An undoubted obstacle to the pursuance of a consistent and steady development in the direction of compulsory education is a lack of continuity and positive direction in educational policy. This seems to have obtained for a long time. It is a somewhat delicate matter to discuss but, looking back over the history of educational administration since the formation of the first Iraqi Government, one is confronted with very frequent changes of Minister of Education, less frequent but still too frequent changes both of officials and in the organization of the Ministry of Education, and lack of consistency in policy with constantly fluctuating emphasis on this or that aspect of educational development. One type of school or administration may be here one year and gone the next. This is particularly true of devices for the training of rural teachers; institutions have been started and then discarded before an evaluation of their real usefulness has been possible.

These changes of policy and of personnel have been due to both political and sectarian factors which it is not possible fully to discuss in this investigation, but of which those concerned with them or affected by them are only too well aware.

Circumstances of this kind tend to produce even in the best officials and educators a sense of frustration. They also make it extremely difficult for the most able Minister of Education to promote a well-founded policy with any assurance that it will be carried out by his successors.

The Problem of the Administration of Education. Administration of the public services in Iraq is generally characterized by its high degree of centralization. This was perhaps inevitable when Iraq as an independent nation was still young and had neither the time nor the resources to work out new arrangements whereby the localities might participate more in the business of government. Further, a somewhat 'tight' central administration was part of the process of ensuring national unity.

Educational administration provides no exception to this practice of centralization. Curricula are laid down by the Ministry of

3: Clark 8-8 (1950) 1951 MEQ Iraq MHI

Education, as are textbooks and the conduct of examinations. The central authority trains the teachers, appoints and dismisses them. Salaries are paid from the central treasury. Apparently no Government school or training institution has funds of its own, and the schools appear to have little freedom in the choice of books and equipment. The daily time-table of the school is determined by the national Primary School Regulations. As has been stated earlier, there are Provincial Directors of Education, but these are direct employees of the Ministry of Education and are their local representatives.

Such a highly centralized system was, of course, indispensable in the early stages when administrative talent was at a premium and when local government institutions did not exist. But it is accompanied by disadvantages and may, in the long run, as schools increase and the amount of detailed central administration grows, have the adverse effect of hindering the Ministry of Education from concentrating on their essential task of promoting a broad policy of national educational development. From conversations with senior officials of the Ministry of Education, the writer gained the impression that, through sheer pressure of daily detail, they were prevented from devoting sufficient of their time and talents to consideration of major issues.

This degree of centralization in a capital city which is so distant from many of the provincial centres and schools, and under which schools must inevitably be treated *en masse*, is also possibly a contributory factor in maintaining the over-rigidity which applies in many of the schools. Schools which are required to work in detail according to central regulations may fail to develop individuality and personality.

The Problem of Differing Regional Needs. Another feature which suggests that the time is arriving when it will be necessary to decentralize some of the administration of education is that, although the total population of Iraq is relatively small, there exist great regional differences. The needs of urban Baghdad and its surrounding province differ greatly from those of the nomads in Muntifiq and Northern Mosul. The problems of the Marsh Arabs of Amara are not those of the Kurds in Erbil and Sulaimaniya.

National unity is an imperative consideration, but it would be unfortunate if the requirements of conformity to a centrally conceived educational system had the effect in any way of conflicting with regional cultures and distinctively local ways of life. If this were so it might, in the long run, not serve the cause of unity.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

SOCIAL FACTORS

Alongside these economic and administrative problems are a number of social factors which inhibit educational development.

Illiteracy and Health Problems. For many years it is likely that illiteracy among the adult population, and the state of the public health, will constitute obstacles to the extension of primary education, especially in the rural areas. The reasons for this are obvious. Parents who are themselves illiterate and living at a low standard of life are not easily persuaded that schooling is a worthwhile substitute for the work of their children. Neither are they able to provide in their homes those standards and values which, if the training of the schoolroom is not be negatived, are such necessary reinforcements to public education. Similarly, the prevalence of epidemic and endemic disease, together with inadequate sanitation, also contributes to a major health problem which must be taken into account in attempting to ensure regular school attendance.

Yet while obstacles of this kind exist, they are diminishing. The Public Health Service is developing slowly but surely, and one has only to see a doctor at work in a remote rural area to appreciate the devoted service which is beginning to contribute to a solution of some of the health problems. Again, although illiteracy and poverty are not the best friends of education, one has only to visit remote little village schools to realize that some of the poorest parents are making sacrifices to send their children to school.

Before compulsory education can be achieved, however, even assuming that the money for it will be forthcoming, a vigorous attack on adult illiteracy will be essential. To this end, what is needed in the rural areas is a type of school which, in addition to meeting the needs of the children, provides in a practical and non-academic fashion realistic fundamental education for the parents. The teacher training institutions would make a most valuable contribution if, quite apart from training the future teachers to attend to the needs of children, they also initiated them into the more practical techniques of teaching illiterates the fundamentals of better living.

The Position of Women and Children. Another obstacle to educational and social development which is often quoted is the position of women in a society which is predominantly Muslim. Traditionally women are discouraged from taking part in public life, and this attitude is bound to be reflected in education.

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

562 872 But this obstacle can be exaggerated. As a glance at the figures showing the growth of primary education in Iraq indicates, the proportion of girls to boys attending primary schools is not high, but their enrolment is steadily increasing. Although most of the large urban schools are single sex schools, Iraq has the distinction of having many co-educational village schools. The growing number of kindergartens are co-educational. In all the institutions of higher education young men and women work together.

The emancipation of women in Iraq still has a long way to go, but convincing signs of it are evident. It would, nevertheless, be a considerable advance if the Ministry of Education were to encourage the recruitment of a number of women to the staffs of the boys' primary schools. From visits to many Iraqi primary schools it is evident that the standards of the women teachers in matters of personal cleanliness of the children, care and decoration of the school premises, general decorum and pleasant social conduct are higher than those of their men colleagues. Their influence in boys' schools would be most salutary.

464 872 The position of children is, of course, difficult when parents, especially in the rural areas, are dependent upon the labour of even very young children. Yet an increasing number of poor parents appear to be sending their children to school. It would be a great inducement to more and regular school attendance if means could be devised of providing free midday meals for some of the children, especially in the village schools. At one of the more modern primary schools in Baghdad attractively cooked and served midday meals are provided, but this is a school attended mainly by children from comfortable homes where the parents can afford to pay for this service. In the rural areas, however, simple food is not expensive, cooking devices and service are cheap, and it should be possible to provide free meals for the needy children at relatively low cost.

It should be noted that effective child labour legislation does not exist in Iraq. Until the time comes when such legislation can be enacted and enforced, compulsory education will be most difficult to apply.

162 166 871 *Tribal Organization and Mobility of Population.* But the most formidable obstacles of all are those related to tribal organization and mobility of population. There are two particular sets of problems, those of the tribes who are still in a nomadic state, and those of the people who are in the transitional stage of semi-settlement. Between them, it is estimated that these nomadic and semi-settled peoples number nearly 2,000,000 persons, roughly 300,000 of whom are children of primary school age.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

Some eight per cent of these tribal dwellers are still nomadic, and educational arrangements for them will obviously be most difficult to apply. People who are on the move, even if this be in regular seasonal cycles or over more or less fixed areas, are never susceptible to organized education. Even in countries where compulsory education laws have been in effect for several years and where school accommodation for the entire child population exists, it is not easy to make arrangements for the schooling of the children of mobile persons such as caravan and boat dwellers. Clearly, in a country like Iraq where the problem of mobility of population is of much greater magnitude, the conventional type of fixed village school is useless for these peoples. Some of them are not averse to education, and, especially in places where a sheikh is anxious that his own children shall be educated, there is an opportunity for providing educational facilities which would be shared by the other children of the tribal group. It is suggested, therefore, that the time is opportune for giving serious consideration to the training of peripatetic teachers of the kind recommended by the Monroe Commission in 1932.

The more urgent problem of tribal education relates to that majority of the tribal peoples who are in the stage of transition from nomadism to a more settled agricultural life. People who are passing through this transitional stage present great problems but also great opportunities to the educator. They are alleged to lose some of the simpler virtues of people who are forced to submit to the strict tribal laws and codes while they are still wandering in the desert. Be that as it may, they undoubtedly need practical education in the amenities of the more settled life, particularly in matters of health, child care under primitive housing conditions and agricultural practice. Their children also need schooling. These educational needs are becoming more acute because, as has been indicated in a previous chapter when discussing the problem of land tenure, the tribal peoples are losing their former wholesome relationship with the sheikh, who is becoming more of a landlord interested in the produce of his tenants and less of a leader with a responsibility for their welfare.

These needs of the tribal dwellers, therefore, and especially those who are in the semi-settled stage, present a formidable challenge to the Iraqi educator. What is probably needed to meet their peculiar requirements is a team of peripatetic teachers who could travel with the tribes while they are on the move, and who could establish simple schools-cum-community-centres in the places where the tribesmen and their families are gradually settling. So far as is known, devices of this kind are as yet untried; it would be well if a few young men and women of ingenuity and a practical

3: Clark S-8 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

876 turn of mind, and preferably from the tribal areas themselves,
166 could be specially trained as intensely practical teachers and then appointed to establish pilot projects of tribal education.

871 Some people with whom these possibilities have been discussed
619 are not optimistic about such attempts to meet the educational needs of the tribes. They maintain that the tribal dweller has a strong suspicion of anything that smacks of Government interference and that he would have nothing to do with publicly-provided education. There is, however, another point of view. The writer and an Iraqi inspector of schools were sitting in a Bedouin guest tent one evening recently, together with two sheikhs, one of whom is reputed to be amassing land for his own purposes and the other who is the more liberal minded son of a sheikh who once established two schools. The following conversation was heard and, for what it is worth, is quoted verbatim:

First sheikh: 'I hear that you have offered to provide a school building if the Government will provide teachers.'

Second sheikh: 'Yes, I would like a school for my son Silah and for the other boys of his age.'

First sheikh: 'If your people become educated they will be demanding more rights. You will be laying up trouble for the future.'

Second sheikh: 'I want my people to be educated so that they may become better human beings. The future is with those who are educated.'

There is, of course, always more than one point of view about educational matters. The point of view of the second sheikh is expressed in another way by an Iraqi educator who writes, 'The problem which the Iraq Government faces as regards the tribes, the solution of which should form one of the main civic aims of education in Iraq, is the broadening of the outlook and allegiance of the tribesmen from their narrow tribal limits to a national horizon'.

000 These then, are some of the economic, political and social problems which must be taken into consideration before any ambitious advance in the direction of compulsory education can be contemplated. It is only against this background that the realism of possible solutions to present educational difficulties can be judged. But these problems are not new and, despite the obstacles which they constitute, definite quantitative progress in the field of primary education has undoubtedly been achieved in recent years.

The next step must be to consider the practicability of making

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MHI Iraq MHI

further advance in the light of these economic, political and social obstacles. Before examining possible ways and means of further educational progress, however, it is well to look at some of the more significant advances which have been made in Iraq in recent years towards the solution of some of the problems which have been outlined in this chapter.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SIGNIFICANT RECENT AND CONTEMPORARY ADVANCE IN IRAQ

000 Although the various obstacles outlined in the previous chapter are serious ones, there is a growing body of evidence which suggests that certain of them are being at any rate partly overcome; some of them in ways which are significant pointers to the directions along which positive advance towards compulsory education may be possible.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADVANCE FAVOURABLE TO EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Certain economic and social advances are taking place which are likely to be favourable to the development of education, both as regards producing more revenue and in improving the standard of life of parents so that they can afford to allow their children to attend school.

241 407 *Evidence of Improved Agricultural Practice.* A few of the more enlightened landowners, especially those who are not absentee landlords and take an active interest in their farms, are engaged in the important business of applying power and science to the land. Large tracts of land in the rainfall region which have not previously been cultivated are being opened up by the mechanical plough. Indeed, it has been fascinating to see land which was hitherto regarded as desert being ploughed at night by modern tractors with headlights. Other landowners and farmers are experimenting, with considerable success, in the growing of relatively new crops such as American cotton of high quality. In some of the northern provinces there are cattle bred to considerably higher standards than formerly. The writer was present at a lively discussion between farmers who were suggesting ways of conserving by modern silage the nutritious spring vegetation most of which is at present only scantily cropped and then left to be burnt up by the summer sun.

654 It has also been gratifying to observe the growing interest which is being taken in certain of the experimental farms organized by the Directorate of Agriculture.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

If developments of this kind proceed it is likely that the agricultural productivity of Iraq will increase considerably. Although most of the profits will find their way into the pockets of a few, more taxable wealth is likely to be produced which could wisely be devoted to the development of educational and other social services. Indeed, if means could be devised of applying income tax to such profits, considerable additional revenues for public services would accrue.

The Dujaila Project of Land Settlement. But perhaps the most hopeful and significant economic and social development which is taking place in Iraq is the Dujaila Project of Land Settlement.

Some years ago, as one of the first attempts at land reform, the Government distributed parcels of land to small, independent farmers. The Government provided the irrigation facilities and, on the land which could consequently be brought under cultivation, allowed families to settle. The scheme was not nearly so successful as it should have been, partly because some of the tenants lacked sufficient farming experience but mainly because it was not accompanied by a scheme for providing agricultural advice. Further, because of the failure to institute adequate drainage arrangements, there is a danger that much of the land in the settlement area will lose its fertility through otherwise avoidable salinity.

In the Dujaila area, in the province of Kut, the Government are now in process of organizing a much more satisfactory and intelligently conceived scheme of land settlement. In 1945 a large tract of hitherto uncultivated land, roughly seventy kilometres long and about half that distance wide, was selected as an area for land settlement. The scheme is being organized by a department known as the Dujaila Directorate to which a reasonable delegation of powers has been given. Its main features may be summarized as follows:

(1) Each settler, who must have had previous agricultural experience in or near the locality, is provided with a holding of about sixty acres. The settler has to sign a well-devised form of contract which binds him for a period of ten years to farm his holding in accordance with advice given by the agriculturalists and horticulturalists attached to the Directorate. At the end of ten years the holding is apparently vested in the holder in a form of limited freehold.

(2) Each settler is eligible to apply for an initial grant not exceeding £100 for the purchase of equipment, assistance towards the building of his house and farm buildings.

(3) Each settler must plant sufficient trees around his holding,

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must establish a horticultural plot, and on his arable land must maintain a balance between summer and winter planting. He must also devote sufficient land for stock pasture.

(4) Each settler must, from his own resources, level, hedge and provide irrigation ditches for his own plot.

(5) A co-operative society is formed and run by the holders. So far some 1,026 holdings have been established in the Dujaila area, and the total population of adults and children is between 12,000 and 15,000. At present there are only two schools with a total roll of 300 children, but the parents appear to be pressing for more educational facilities and two new schools, of good design, are in process of construction. The Provincial Director of Education, who takes a keen interest in the scheme, has plans for a distribution of primary schools throughout the whole area to avoid long travel by young children, and also wishes to establish intermediate and secondary schools situated in a central village which is about to be built. He is anxious that the upper forms of the primary schools shall develop a rural bias and that the intermediate and secondary schools shall have 'agricultural streams'.

It is perhaps early to judge the success of this scheme, which has been in operation for only four years and is still in process of development. From carefully checked evidence, however, it appears that the holders, most of whom were previously landless cultivators living at a low subsistence level, are making an average income of between £300 and £400 per annum. The sponsors of the scheme also maintain that, whereas the average grain produced from one dunum of land on privately owned farms in the neighbourhood is 100 kilos, the average from the same area in the Dujaila district is 250 kilos. From admittedly superficial observation the tenants would certainly appear to be living a richer and more robust life than their neighbours who remain landless cultivators. Many of the tenants have provided themselves with houses which, by local standards, are comfortably designed and furnished. The men have an appearance of dignity and independence. Indeed, it is claimed that 'you can always recognize a Dujaila man in the streets of Kut because of his confidence and bearing'.

The scheme has, possibly, certain deficiencies in that the tenants, apart from improving their holdings by tree planting, hedging and irrigation channels, are required to pay no rent. True they make a certain contribution to the public purse through the sales tax, but it may be wondered how wise it is to encourage an attitude of 'something for nothing'. Public services are badly needed in Iraq and even new land settlers should realize that they must be paid for. It is understood, however, from discussion

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

with some of those concerned that the question of rentals is to be considered. Capital also will soon be needed for drainage works and, here again, the tenants should be expected to make their contribution.

With this possible drawback which may soon be set right, the Dujaila Scheme of Land Settlement is important as a pointer towards one means of altering the prevailing land tenure system. As has been suggested earlier in this study, so long as this system remains unaltered it will never be possible to produce sufficient national wealth and to release that part of it which is necessary for the finance of projects such as the provision of compulsory education. Radically to reform the land tenure system at the present time would not be possible, because those who profit from it are a powerful influence in the country. Fortunately, however, there exist great tracts of uncultivated government land throughout the country which, when water is brought to them in a way similar to that in the Dujaila area, will be amenable to similar development.

Projects of this kind are being applied in five or six other regions, although most of the others are not at the advanced stage of the Dujaila project. The scheme of land settlement is significant in relation to the future development of education in that, if it continues as present indications suggest, it is both providing more taxable wealth for public services and is raising the standard of living of its participants who should thus be more ready to seek educational opportunities for their children. Equally important, it is producing men with a greater freedom and independence who are bound to be more articulate concerning social affairs and who will ultimately be able to play their part in democratic local government. One of the features of Iraqi political and social life which strikes a visitor to the country is that, apart from the official class who, incidentally are mainly men of urban background or urban education, there is little in the way of a middle class in the towns and nothing approaching a middle section of the community in the villages. It may well be that, by providing the participants with a better standard of life and consequently of self-esteem, land settlement schemes of this kind will have the effect of promoting a rural middle class who will not only bridge the existing wide gap between the very rich and the very poor but will demand their share in local affairs and thus help to promote a more vigorous local government.

Great credit must go to the Government for fostering such a bold social experiment, to the Director of the Dujaila Project for his obviously selfless devotion to the work, and to the Provincial Director of Education for attempting to plan a schools system in

3: Clark S-8 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

000 the area. If the project continues to progress at its present rate, it must undoubtedly be regarded as one of the most significant and far-reaching contributions to rural, social and ultimately educational progress in Iraq. Incidentally, it is understood that the Dujaila Committee which controls this and related schemes has, at present, no educational representative on it. It is desirable that such representation should be provided for, so that the economic and social changes which are taking place in the new communities may go hand in hand with consistent educational development. Further, the educators who are associated with the scheme would do well at all times to enlist the advice of the working farmers and agricultural advisers, so that the new schools to be provided there serve the needs of the local community more realistically than do most of the village schools.

SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL ADVANCES

872 876 There are other developments which provide pointers towards progress in the right direction, educational movements which provide most hopeful clues to the lines along which future educational advance may proceed.

Some Progressive Primary Schools. Although most of the primary schools are uniform in their conformity to an over-bookish curriculum, a small minority of them are escaping into a freer educational environment with less rigid teaching and learning techniques.

Some of the demonstration primary schools attached to or used by the better training institutions are adopting methods which are much more in accord with the real educational needs of growing children. Similar developments are being encouraged by a small body of progressive primary school teachers both in Baghdad and in some of the provinces. In these schools there is less of rote and verbal memorization, and more activity on the part of the children themselves. In such schools the teacher is not so much a lecturer working according to a narrow interpretation of a centrally prescribed curriculum, but is rather a less obtrusive helper who aids the children to learn by their own initiative and enquiry. In some of these schools there are gardens made and enjoyed by the pupils; physical education is not so much 'drill' as the enjoyment of natural movement; attractive wall illustrations make the internal environment more cheerful; the spirit of play is harnessed to the process of learning.

Some of these schools, because of their experimental nature, are

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

allowed a greater choice of textbooks than those prescribed in the official programme of studies. It is to be hoped that they will use their freedom to encourage the use of more colourful books for, although some of the textbooks prescribed by the central body are illustrated, most of them are devoid of colour. 872 876

These schools are bound to spread their influence to others, especially if some of the assistant teachers are prepared to leave the capital city and provincial centres for a time and are promoted to headships in some of the more remote schools.

The Kindergarten Movement. Side by side with this practice of livelier and more modern techniques in this limited minority of primary schools is the growth of a small but steadily extending kindergarten movement. One of these schools is attached to the primary teachers' training college for girls in Baghdad, and affords the teacher trainees the opportunity of seeing in a practical and vivid fashion the pursuit of modern educational methods in a way which they would never derive from the books they use. Others have been established in the large towns and provincial capitals, mainly through local effort and self-help. [875]

These kindergarten schools are perhaps the liveliest and happiest educational institutions in Iraq. Generally they are in well-designed buildings which have been furnished carefully and pleasantly. Teaching aids, apparatus and wall illustrations are sometimes the best that could be found in any kindergarten school, even in countries whose educational systems are much older and supported by more public money. Fortunately also the teachers in such schools have considerable freedom to work in accordance with a curriculum based not on prescribed syllabuses but upon the observed needs of young children.

In the opinion of the writer the kindergarten movement is one of the most hopeful indications of real educational advance in Iraq. If the spirit and methods of these schools could be gradually embodied in the life of the primary schools and the primary schools left with a greater degree of freedom, there is a probability that this would be the beginning of a most wholesome revolution in educational method throughout the country.

A few of the primary schools have, indeed, within the limits of the prescribed syllabuses that they must follow, tried to embody some of the activity methods of the kindergarten school into their lower forms. Some attempt free drawing as apart from the almost universal copy drawing. Others not only have school magazines but encourage the pupils to edit them and contribute to them. That it is not easy, however, to persuade the teacher that education is something for its own sake and not merely an avenue to

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

872 876 promotion, is indicated by the following extract from a teacher's introduction to the first issue of a primary school magazine:

'Our Magazine.
Dear Pupils,
This is the first number of our school magazine. I want every pupil to read it very carefully because it is for you, not for the teacher.
Please read this paper carefully and ask me any question about it. If you do as I say, you will succeed in the examination.
Your Teacher,
Signed .....'

874 654 *The Agricultural Primary Schools.* The need for realistic village schools in Iraq has been advocated in the Report of the Monroe Commission and elsewhere. They have taken a long time to materialize, but there are now signs of progress.

In 1948 the Ministry of Education requested the Provincial Directors of Education to establish an experimental primary school in each province. One such school has since been provided in most of the provinces, not as an entirely new project but as an extension of an existing primary school. Several acres of land have been attached to these schools and some of them keep a limited amount of livestock. Some have modest dairy equipment, a stock of hand tools for the pupils and an agricultural machine such as a power-driven cultivator. One or two have a tractor. In the irrigation districts some possess their own water pump.

Unfortunately these schools were established during a period of retrenchment, and although the Ministry of Education launched this important experiment it was apparently unable to provide the money for other essential buildings and equipment such as handicraft shops, simple laboratories and materials for experiment. It was also unable to provide every such school with a teacher acquainted with the basic practice and principles of farming. Despite these initial handicaps, some of the agricultural primary schools have started courageously and have attempted to free [177] themselves from a purely academic curriculum. In certain of the schools, apart from teaching methods of normal cultivation, experiments are being made in the growth of crops hitherto unfamiliar to the local economy. Indeed one teacher claims that, through his introduction of American cotton on to the school farm, the local landowner has since grown this crop on a large scale and has made a substantial profit from it. If this is so, it certainly illustrates the extra-mural influence of a village school which adjusts its curriculum to real life situations.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

The starting of these agricultural primary schools is, in itself, of considerable significance because it does show that, after an over-long attachment to a bookish syllabus, the Ministry of Education is becoming alive to the need for the sort of village school which is so badly needed in Iraq but which has been so slow to develop. If, by improved training methods for rural teachers, together with more generous provision for practical subjects, buildings and equipment, these schools could be adequately staffed and equipped, they would probably serve as a model for the village school of the future. At present, although they have made a good beginning, they are in an experimental stage, and it is unfortunate that this important venture should have to be tried out under such hampering conditions. It is to be hoped that failure to make the necessary provision in the way of agricultural staff and equipment will not cause these hopefully experimental village schools to revert to the restricted and less realistic pursuits of the conventional Iraqi rural school.

These experimental agricultural schools are, in the opinion of the writer, so important for the future that the Ministry of Education would be well advised, as an urgent measure, to assist them in three ways. Firstly, an attempt should be made to secure the services of an experienced teacher-cum-agriculturalist who would be Adviser in Rural Education and take a special interest in these schools, particularly with a view to assisting them to integrate agricultural subjects with the rest of the school activities and not simply regard agriculture as 'an extra'. Secondly, even if this means a minor economy in another direction, these schools should be liberally provided with equipment so that they do not, through inanition, wither back to their bookish ways. Finally, opportunity should be given to the heads and agricultural teachers in these schools to meet their colleagues from other schools, so that they may learn from one another's successes and failures. In several of these agricultural primary schools the teachers exhibit commendable keenness, but are still groping their way without the material help and advice which they need.

Courses for Serving Teachers. Another sign of educational advance is the preparedness of serving teachers to attend professional courses. Still more encouraging is the obvious value they have derived from the courses which it has been possible to organize for them. A few years ago, with a view to promoting the teaching of English in a livelier way, some enthusiastic officers of the Ministry of Education organized regional residential courses in this subject. It is understood that the response of the teachers was excellent. More important, the improved methods of oral English

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3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

875 teaching which are now appearing in the top classes of the primary schools suggest that the Iraqi teacher is by no means rigidly conservative in method, and is quick to apply new techniques when his eyes have been opened to them.

During the last year or two, however, possibly because of the need to find money to cope with the additional numbers of children who are presenting themselves for admission into primary schools, it has apparently been difficult to finance courses for teachers. It is to be hoped that the time will soon come when it is possible to organize courses for serving teachers, not only in specific subjects, but also of a more general nature. The necessarily brief and restricted training which has had to be provided for many of the teachers in the past means that the educational horizons of some of the serving teachers are not as broad as they might well be. If it is still felt that the cost of many residential courses of a general nature cannot yet be met, consideration might be given to the possibility of taking short courses to the teachers themselves in the teachers' clubs which exist up and down the country.

THE ADVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE IN THE PROVINCES

871 64- In addition to these evidences of advance in the schools and among the teachers, there are also signs of certain trends in the provinces which, as will be seen later, may be highly significant as aids to the ultimate implementation of plans for the promotion of compulsory education.

The Beginnings of Local Educational Administration. Until very recently, the impetus for educational development in Iraq has, as already pointed out, come from the centre. The Ministry of Education has not only supervised the national system but has also provided most of the schools and most of the money. It has also taken the administrative initiative. There are now indications, even in the remoter provinces, that the people are wanting to have their share in educational development. If these trends, as some of the people in the provinces maintain, are real evidence of the beginnings of a public concern about education they are, indeed, most important.

One hopeful sign is that, despite their very limited powers and the fact that certain of the Provincial Directors of Education are afraid to take any initiative without previous sanction from the Ministry of Education, some of the Directors are exhibiting considerable energy and initiative in promoting local educational advance. In some of the provinces the Directors complain about

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

the lack of suitable school buildings and the fact that they have to refuse children admission to schools, but pessimistically maintain that no progress can be made because the Ministry of Education cannot or will not find the money for them. But others are showing real enterprise and, in co-operation with the Provincial Governor, are building new schools with money obtained from local contributions.

In one province, through the initiative and persistence of an energetic Director of Education who has that commendable combination of qualities desirable in an educational administrator, namely a sense of vocation and a love of children, five well-designed new primary schools and three similar intermediate schools are being built at the time of writing, mainly out of local contributions. In the same province the Director of Education has built a new and well furnished kindergarten school, and has provided a central playing field and changing rooms through money collected locally. When he came to the province some four years ago there were twenty-eight primary schools. There are now fifty-four and the number will soon have increased to sixty.

Local initiative of this kind is of great significance. It suggests that the way to advance is not only through schemes that may be produced in the Ministry of Education itself, but also through the energies of people on the spot who know local needs and the ways and means of meeting them. This provincial effort also suggests that, despite limitations imposed by the central budget, money for educational development on no modest scale can be obtained from local resources when there is local initiative and enterprise. True, local voluntary contributions towards the building of new schools are not in the long run the best means of financing local educational provision, because such sources may not be regular and may dry up with changes in the circumstances of the charitable donors. Ultimately, such contributions will need to be supplemented by more regularly and equitably distributed local taxes. But these attempts to meet locally some of the costs of the educational provision are likely to be important future means of financing educational advance at a greater pace than appears to be practicable by reliance on central exchequer sources alone. Extra taxes are of course never popular but, when additional monies for educational purposes have to be found, it may prove that the levying of local taxes by a local administration is likely to prove less obnoxious to the psychology of people of tribal origin who have an inherent dislike of distant central government.

Awakening Educational Consciousness in the Localities. After travelling through most of the provinces of Iraq, and discussing possibilities

3: Clark S-S (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

of educational advance with many people in the localities, the writer is persuaded that there is a growing consciousness of the need for more primary schools. In province after province, and village after village, there were local notabilities who had provided school buildings from their own resources and others who were prepared to find the money for schools and furniture if the Ministry of Education would provide the teachers.

Significantly, some of these local people complained about what they described as 'absence of reality' in the work of the primary schools. They maintained that, while they are anxious that the children should learn to read and write, they would prefer that they were also taught in the schools how to handle tools, how to keep healthy, and how to till the soil. One parent complained that 'present day education is divorced from life and only goes skin deep'. He quoted an instance of an urban trained teacher who was giving a hygiene lecture in school, complete with a vivid illustration of the intestinal system, but was oblivious of the fact that flies were crawling over the faces of some of his listeners! The few women with whom it was possible to discuss educational affairs urged that cookery and homecraft should play an important part in the education of the older girls in the primary school. One farmer's wife said: 'I would prefer that my daughter learned how to sew rather than do geometry in school'.

Enough has perhaps been said by now to indicate that, although Iraq still has a long way to go before any realistic attempt to bridge the gap between the existing primary schools system and a complete system of compulsory education will be fruitful, changes of an economic, social and educational nature are taking place which give cause for sober optimism. It is now possible, in the light of these advances and changes in attitude and public opinion, to consider ways and means of promoting further advance in the educational field.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

CHAPTER SIX

A POLICY OF ADVANCE TOWARDS COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN IRAQ

So far in this study an attempt has been made to ascertain the main educational needs of Iraq, to evaluate recent developments in primary education both quantitatively and qualitatively, to demonstrate the enormous obstacles to further advance and to illustrate, from examples, the ways in which some of these obstacles are being overcome. It is clear, however, that while some circumstances and conditions exist which suggest that the time for further advance is propitious, such advance will only be possible by the adoption and persistent implementation of a policy which takes into account both the desired objective and the obstacles which still have to be surmounted. The obstacles are clear enough. The desired objective is also clear, always provided it is appreciated that quantitative advance is not in itself sufficient. What is needed is not only a policy of advance which will get more children into school, but one which will ensure that children enjoy forms of primary education which are related to their individual needs and to the special needs of Iraq.

Before considering possible lines of advance towards compulsory education for all children in schools of the right type, it is necessary to call to mind the magnitude of the task quantitatively. With a potential primary school population of 750,000 children which is rising daily, with not more than twenty-four per cent of this number now attending school for periods of varying duration, with a national budget which is barely balanced, with a country which is badly in need of other public services, it would appear to be unrealistically idealistic to assume that any effective advance towards universal compulsory education could be achieved over any short period of years. The present total education budget would have to be more than doubled to provide primary education for all children at existing standards, some 15,000 additional teachers would have to be trained, and a sum of money which it is not possible to estimate would be required for capital expenditure on school buildings.

The magnitude of the problem, however, is not new to the Ministry of Education. In 1946 a special committee of the Ministry drew up a 'Ten-Year Plan' in which it was suggested that, provided

2: Clark S-S (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

871 645 185 certain administrative reforms were introduced into the Ministry itself, and provided a vigorous educational drive was made, it should prove possible within ten years to achieve a total school attendance of fifty per cent of all children of primary school age. Under this plan it was hoped that it would be possible to train 400 additional teachers in the first year and provide for an increased school attendance of some 12,000 children. At this rate of progress some 42,000 additional children should have been attending primary schools by the end of 1949. Actually the total increased primary school attendance between 1946 and 1949 amounted to some 34,000 children. This increase took place despite the fact that, apart from some not too satisfactory measures for the short-term training of teachers, the reforms advocated by the special committee of the Ministry of Education were never put into operation. In other words, the recent quantitative advance appears to have resulted not so much through any 'Ten-Year Plan' as because of continued public pressure.

871 185 There is no doubt that this public pressure for more schools will continue and that, unless a more vigorous policy of coping with the demand is initiated, quantitative demand will continue for some years to outstrip primary school provision. Indeed, when one looks back over a period of years and realizes that, whereas in 1931 there were not more than 35,000 children attending primary schools, there are now 175,000 children, there is little cause for any immediate pessimism so far as numerical advance is concerned. It is for this reason that some Iraqi educational reformers maintain that, on the assumption that quantitative development goes on at the same total pace, i.e., another five-fold increase over the next twenty years, compulsory education of a type could be achieved by 1970. It is not possible, however, to predict the future rate of progress even in general terms because, although quantitative growth has been rapid since 1930, it cannot go on beyond a certain point until some of the economic, political and social obstacles already outlined have been solved. Although numerical development has increased five-fold since 1930, that rate of increase will undoubtedly drop when the children of the relatively higher income groups are in school and when the Ministry of Education is confronted with the task of meeting the needs of the children of very poor parents and those who are living under semi-settled or nomadic conditions.

If these suppositions are valid, the broad lines of a policy of genuine advance towards compulsory education become clearer. First, steps must be taken to cope with the present unsatisfied demand for primary education. Secondly, consideration will sooner or later have to be given to the measures which will need to be

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

taken to provide both for the children whose parents cannot yet afford to send them to school and those who are living under partly or entirely nomadic conditions. Equally important, preparations will need to be made for ensuring that qualitative accompanies quantitative progress. If real advance towards compulsory education is desired, some of these measures will have to be taken immediately; others will have to be developed more gradually. Consideration must, therefore, now be given to a policy of advance towards compulsory education which includes both immediate and long-term measures.

A SHORT-TERM POLICY

COPING WITH EXISTING DEMANDS

The most immediate necessity is that measures should be taken to meet the demands of parents who wish to send their children to primary schools. Some advocates of educational advance do not recommend this immediate action, urging that the more important task is to improve the quality of the existing schools. It is doubtful whether this view could be sustained: it would provoke further parental disillusionment and deprive many children of a fair start in life.

An attempt should, therefore, be made to ascertain the extent of this immediate problem by asking every Provincial Director of Education to give, from his local knowledge, details of the number of children in the province who would attend school under existing conditions if accommodation were available for them, the number of new schools needed and the extra teachers required. The results would probably be surprising in that they would demonstrate a public desire for education in the provinces of which the Ministry of Education may not be entirely aware.

These needs should be met forthwith and financed by a special allocation from the central budget in the next financial year. The extra teachers could be found partly by abandoning uneconomic rented premises which are wasteful of teaching staff, but mainly by 'stepping-up' existing teacher training provision as an emergency measure. Some new buildings would be necessary but many of these, at any rate in the smaller towns and villages, would be provided voluntarily from local resources. In the larger towns, consideration should be given to a suggestion made by an Iraqi economist that new school buildings could be provided through

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

000 the floating of local public loans which could be partly redeemed by the gradual release of the large sums of 'dead money' which are at present being spent on rented premises which cannot be used economically.

In other words, what is needed at the present time is a vigorous administrative gesture which would assure the public that the Ministry of Education is controlling the existing pressure for primary schools rather than being jockeyed along by it.

REFORM OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

871 185 645 But perhaps before the Ministry of Education can itself promote immediate measures of this kind with the vigour required, consideration will have to be given once more to two major administrative reforms which were advocated by the special committee appointed to draw up the 'Ten-Year Plan' in 1946.

The Minister as a Trustee of the Public Educational Interest. Until very recently the advent of a new Minister of Education has tended to be accompanied by abrupt changes and reverses of educational policy, and sometimes by changes in official personnel. This is certainly not calculated to assist that continuity and persistence in educational policy which is so essential at the present time.

Some maintain that this unfortunate tendency has been due to the intrusion of party politics and sectarian interests into the Ministry. If this is true, it should be emphasized that a Ministry of Education, while being responsive to sound educational opinion, should always endeavour independently to attach itself to national educational policy which is free from these non-educational considerations.

It is probably nearer the truth to suggest that these fluctuations in educational policy are due as much to the influence of the individual opinions and plans of the Ministers themselves. It is perhaps natural in a young and rapidly developing country that Ministers should wish to leave their own impress on the country's educational affairs. It is not desirable, however, that they should have the unrestricted power to do this, and in any event they should be required to justify proposed changes before men who have had long experience of education and educational administration. It is refreshing, therefore, to gather from conversations with some of the recent holders of this important office that the time may be approaching when the Minister tends more and more to regard himself, not as one who is entitled to control

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

educational policy in the light of opinions and schemes based on his own inevitably limited educational experience, or by considerations of his own political group or sect, but as a trustee of the educational interest of the whole country.

The Formation of a National Council of Education. It was also suggested by the special committee referred to that a means of assisting successive Ministers to pursue a consistent policy of educational advance would be the creation of a National Council of Education which would be composed of Directors-General of Education, the Deans of Institutions of Higher Education, representatives from other Ministries whose co-operation is essential in educational progress, representatives appointed by Parliament, and other leading personalities in the country. It was suggested that 'the principle function of this National Council of Education should be to ensure that educational policy is well-founded and that there is stability in its application'. In other words, the National Council of Education would be a continuing body pledged to an agreed national policy of educational development from which successive Ministers of Education would find it difficult to depart.

It appears that a properly constituted National Council of Education has never been formed. Some such bodies have been established and abolished from time to time at the discretion of successive Ministers. One reason given for failure to maintain a National Council of Education is that the Minister should justify himself, not to a Committee of 'experts' but to public opinion. Theoretically there is much to be said for such an explanation but, in a country where the bulk of the population have not had educational opportunity and cannot therefore be articulate in public affairs, it is difficult to decide what constitutes a sound public opinion in matters educational.

A new Education Law giving the Ministry of Education the necessary powers and duties to cope with present pressing demands and needs is overdue. Such a law should include categorical provision for the establishment of a well-balanced National Council of Education with a dignified status. It should have definite powers and duties and meet at regular and legally stipulated intervals. The Minister should be required to consult the Council on major changes of policy, and should not make changes without a majority decision by it. The Council should approve all major plans and developments and regulations of the Ministry before they become effective. Most important, the National Council should have the power of initiating discussion and enquiry as it thinks fit, and should not necessarily await the invitation of the Minister before so doing.

3t Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

871 185 645 There are signs that the present time is opportune for the formation of this body. The writer had the privilege of being present at a recent *ad hoc* gathering of men prominent in the educational affairs of Iraq, presided over by the Minister of Education. The level of discussion was exceptionally high, and one advantage of the meeting was that the Minister was both able to be made aware of trends of opinion and in turn to bring to the notice of the 'experts' practical administrative considerations which might prevent him from applying all their advice. If such a body could be transformed into a regularly meeting National Council of Education and given the powers indicated, it is likely that that consistent policy without which advance in the direction of compulsory education cannot be achieved would be considerably assisted.

871 645 *Concentration of the Ministry of Education on Major Issues of National Educational Policy.* If the Minister were guided in the formation of policy by a properly constituted National Council of Education, the way to consideration of an agreed national policy of educational advance would be facilitated. However, before these reforms could achieve their object, they would need to be accompanied by a reformed conception of the Ministry of Education itself. At the present time, the Ministry is more in the nature of a national administrative office than a policy-making body. In addition to controlling all forms of education and exercising most minute financial control in small matters, the senior officials of the Ministry appear to be occupied with a mass of detailed administration, much of which could very well be left to the Provincial Directors of Education.

It is suggested that, at any rate in the sphere of primary education, many of the existing administrative tasks performed by officers of the Ministry of Education should be transferred to the offices of the Provincial Directors of Education. If this were done it would enable the senior officials of the Ministry to concentrate their talents on major issues of national policy which, at the present time, need considerable thought and investigation. If compulsory education of quality is ever to become a reality, matters of major policy which at present receive insufficient consideration must be investigated by officers of the Ministry before the facts concerning them can be adequately considered by the Minister and the National Council of Education which it is hoped he may soon have to assist him. Plans for improved training and distribution of teachers badly need mature consideration, as do investigations into the most suitable types of school building for a country with the climatic conditions of Iraq.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

Programmes of study, especially those for the rural and agricultural schools, need much thought and study by those who administer them. Ultimately, local development plans for advance towards compulsory schooling will need most careful consideration. These vital tasks cannot be undertaken adequately until the Ministry of Education is relieved of much of its present stifling day-to-day detail.

THE CREATION OF LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

As was indicated in the preceding chapter, one of the significant social and educational developments in Iraq is the growth of local interest in education which is accompanied by some vigorous local administrative initiative and a preparedness to find money for local development. This suggests that, quite apart from the Ministry of Education being able to clear its own decks for action by passing on much of the details of administration to the provincial education officers, there exist in the localities valuable means by which a policy of advance towards compulsory education could be facilitated.

A movement in the direction of enlisting the aid of the provinces in the increase of educational provision was considered a few years ago. Under the Provincial Administration Law of 1945, a General Provincial Council was established in each province. It was empowered, in a limited way, to levy local taxes to support various local services, including some aspects of education. For one reason or another, the exercise of these local taxing powers in relation to education appears to have been restricted by the administrative action of the central Government departments. It is understood, however, that a more vigorous attempt is about to be made to give the General Provincial Council in every province wider powers of control over education up to and including the primary schools.

It is to be hoped that, when this transfer of certain powers to the General Provincial Councils takes place, it will be done in such a way that local interest in education is given full opportunity. It would be a great aid to local desire for educational powers and advance if each General Provincial Council were instructed to create amongst its members a Provincial Education Committee to which would be delegated the task both of controlling local primary schools and of developing primary education. There can be no doubt from conversations which have taken place that local people are anxious to exercise these powers. There is equally no doubt that, with some exceptions, the Provincial Directors of

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

871 635 Education would, if the transfer of control from the centre were effected by stages and with adequate advice, be able to serve their Provincial Education Committees well.

One great advantage of giving local representatives control of their primary schools would be that it would enhance the increasing local interest which is being taken in educational affairs. Increased local control, with the power both to levy local taxes in addition to the existing voluntary contributions, would also help to spread the burden of educational expenditure which is so essential to development. Further, as will be suggested later, these Provincial Education Committees might after a time provide the machinery for preparing detailed plans for local provision of compulsory education.

It is very much to be hoped that this opportunity of establishing Local Education Authorities will be neither lost nor frustrated, because it may well be that it will provide the only suitable arrangement both for ascertaining local needs and for raising the additional monies which will be required from local sources before compulsory education can ever become a reality. This hope needs to be reiterated because it is understood that although the Government have the proposal under active consideration, it is not popular in certain sections of the Ministry of Education. Apparently some of the senior officials fear that the transfer of primary education functions from the centre to the localities would jeopardize existing educational arrangements. Such fears may or may not be justified. It is, however, part of the democratic process to provide local governing bodies with the opportunity of learning from the mistakes they may make. In any event, if one of the main sources of additional revenues for education is to be found in the provinces, it is only appropriate that those who are to find the money should have their say as to the way it is to be used.

THE FINANCING OF THE NEW EDUCATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

000 *Sharing of National and Local Expenditure—a Grants System.* On the assumption that the proposed transfer of powers in respect of primary education from the Ministry of Education to Local Education Authorities will take place, early consideration will have to be given to the financing of education under the new arrangement. If the Provincial Education Committees are to be created, it is essential that, through the General Provincial Councils, they should be given the power to levy local taxes for education, both to augment existing voluntary contributions and

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

as a means of spreading the burden of local educational provision equitably amongst the community.

This will create a dual or complementary system of educational finance, partly national and partly local. The most satisfactory system of fairly distributing educational expenditure as between the national and the local budgets would be the devising of a grants system. Under this grants system each Provincial Education Committee would annually receive monies from the national education budget to supplement the taxes and other contributions raised locally. If the amount of the annual Ministry of Education grant for each province could, subject to the limitations of the national budget, be increased—for a time at any rate—proportionately to the local monies raised, this would probably act as a strong incentive to local self-help.

The Financing of School Building. Under existing arrangements for the public use of royalties received from the oil companies, money from this important and steadily increasing source is wisely devoted to the Capital Works Budget. In the past it has apparently not been considered possible to devote monies from this Capital Works Budget on any large scale to capital works for educational purposes such as schools and teachers' houses. Indeed, as during the last financial year this Capital Works Budget showed a deficit, it would have been difficult to impose educational demands on it. As, however, it is understood that the revenue from oil royalties is likely to increase three-fold during the next few years, a shrewd Minister of Education with an eye to future progress towards compulsory education would doubtless do his utmost to persuade Parliament to earmark a fair share of this additional revenue for capital works of an educational nature.

Financing Material Inducements to School Attendance. Although during the first period of this short-term policy of advance towards compulsory education the task will be mainly that of coping with existing and potential demands for admission into primary schools, some financial provision will need to be made for assisting the children of the very low income groups. It would be desirable, therefore, if powers could be given to the Provincial Education Committees to devote part of the money derived from local taxes or contributions towards the provision of meals and clothes for really needy children. This would enable the Provincial Education Committees to gain experience of what will be an important aspect of educational administration when the time comes to compel the attendance at school of the many children whose parents are too poor to take advantage of educational provision unless it is accompanied by material assistance.

3: Clark S-6 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN IRAQ

THE DECLARATION OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION AREAS

871 The initial tasks during this period of the operation of the suggested short-term policy will be those of coping with existing pressure on the primary schools, undertaking the essential reforms of the central administration, creating a system of local educational administration and devising a scheme of educational finance which will stimulate the provision of money for primary education from local sources. But it should also be possible during this period to take practical steps towards the completion of provision for compulsory education in specific areas.

It will take a very long time before it is possible to declare any one province as a complete compulsory education area with any hope that the declaration will be effective. It will also be several years before compulsory education can be effectively declared in the large towns. For instance, in Baghdad schools will have to be established for another sixty per cent of the primary school population before an attempt can be made to enforce compulsory education.

There are, however, a number of smaller towns and large villages where, with the provision of a few more schools, primary school places could be provided for all the local child population. For instance, in one of the northern provincial towns, out of a total estimated primary school population of 4,500 children, some 2,700 pupils are already attending fourteen primary schools. The provision of six additional primary schools each with accommodation for 300 pupils would complete provision for primary education in that town. There are many smaller towns where, even if existing primary school accommodation is limited, the provision of but a few schools would enable all the children of primary school age to be educated. In addition, many villages, both large and small, exist where the establishment of one or two more schools and the completion of existing incomplete schools would provide the necessary accommodation within a year or two.

000 If, therefore, the suggested administrative reforms outlined took place so that the Ministry of Education, on the advice of the National Council of Education, could devote adequate time and thought to the issue of the necessary directions and guidance, the newly created Provincial Education Committees could, as one of their early tasks, concentrate on the provision of schools in those towns and villages where the establishment of a few extra schools would mean the completion of primary education within a few years. So soon as any town or village has sufficient primary schools for the total child population, the Ministry of Education should then declare that town or village a compulsory education area.

3: Clark S-8 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

To achieve this end the Provincial Education Committees would, in addition to establishing the additional schools, need to give assistance to very poor children in the way of meals and clothing. They would also have to add to the Provincial Director's staff one or more School Attendance Officers whose task it would be both to act as liaison officer between home and school and to bring defaulting parents before the courts.

Declaration of specific towns and villages as compulsory education areas would, of course, mean that for a number of years compulsory education up and down the country would be piecemeal and uneven; but it will never be possible to jump from the existing situation to complete compulsory school attendance. Gradual provision of compulsory education, town by town and village by village is the only practical way of working towards the ultimate goal. During this period of piecemeal establishment of compulsory education, however, both the Ministry of Education and the Provincial Education Committees would gain realistic experience of the problems associated with promoting, assisting and enforcing compulsory education, and would accumulate a most valuable body of practical evidence in readiness for the time when it is possible to apply compulsory education on a much larger scale.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PILOT PROJECT IN TRIBAL EDUCATION

Short-term measures such as those indicated should both get more children into primary schools and enable compulsory education to be declared in certain towns and villages throughout Iraq. These provisions, however, will rarely reach the children of parents who are still living a nomadic or semi-nomadic life. Interim educational arrangements badly need to be made for this large section of the population until they are settled and thus become more amenable to conventional types of schooling.

Much has been written about the need for tribal education, but little or no actual experience has been gained of the problems and techniques involved. It is suggested, therefore, that immediate consideration should be given to the establishment of a pilot project in tribal education in an area where tribal organization is likely to continue for some time. Such a project would probably take the form of a semi-mobile primary school to which should be attached a 'Fundamental Education Unit' for adults who have never attended school. Application might well be made to Unesco to enquire whether that agency, partly from experience which is being derived elsewhere, could give the necessary assistance in connexion with such a project. It is understood that there is a

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

It is understood that there is a
871 possibility that one of the most enlightened sheikhs of one of the
185 largest tribal groups in Iraq would be prepared to co-operate by providing premises, together with accommodation for the team consisting possibly of teachers, an agriculturalist and health officer.

A LONG-TERM POLICY

ooo These then are some of the short-term measures which it is suggested should be considered as the basis of a practical policy leading towards the establishment of compulsory education. They are, of course, only 'short-term' in the sense that they constitute lines of fairly immediate action, most of which will need to be carried forward and embodied within a more long-term policy. It is now necessary to discuss other measures, more of a qualitative nature, which will take longer to materialize but which must be put into operation over a much longer period if quantitative advance is to result in the provision of the right type or types of school.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHER

The Training of Teachers. The establishment of more schools must be accompanied by the training of more and better qualified teachers. If the Ministry of Education could be freed from its serious overload of administrative detail on the lines indicated, one of its most important tasks would be the development and gradual transformation of existing arrangements for the training of teachers.

As was indicated in Chapter Three, the output of teachers from training institutions during the current year is likely to be 754. Some of the training institutions are doing excellent and lively work. They are handicapped by the fact, however, that many of the students did not complete a full secondary education before they entered the training institution. This means that the period of training for these teachers has to be devoted too much to the task of repairing deficiencies in educational background, and is not sufficiently a professional college course. Many of those who had the advantage of a full secondary education before they took up training do not enter a training college proper but attend a one-year course attached to a secondary school with limited facilities.

Training devices of this kind were essential if the output of teachers was to keep pace with the rapidly growing demand for more schools. The effects of inadequate training are, however,

3: Clark S-5 (1960)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

writ large in the schools. A minority of the teachers do extraordinarily well and illustrate how qualities of personality can overcome training deficiencies. But many are able to do little more than slavishly adhere to their narrow interpretation of the centrally prescribed syllabuses. It is only to be expected that, under such conditions, some of the primary schools are not the robust and adventurous places that they could be.

It is accordingly suggested that the Ministry of Education should re-consider their policy of training teachers. Measures that need to be taken may be summarized as follows:

(1) Over a period of years the existing courses for ex-primary or intermediate school pupils should be abandoned, and replaced by professional courses for which the entry qualification should be at least the intermediate school-leaving certificate and, at a future time when more secondary school graduates exist, the secondary school-leaving certificate.

(2) The one-year post secondary school training courses should be removed from the secondary schools and transformed into two-year professional courses.

(3) The programmes of study for all training institutions should be re-considered and, bearing in mind that the majority of the future school population will come from rural communities, all future primary school teachers should have a good deal of practical training in handicrafts and rural science.

(4) The two existing rural teachers' colleges should be transformed into professional courses, with a strong agricultural bias, for students whose entry qualification should be at least the intermediate school-leaving certificate. One of the colleges should be removed from its present unsatisfactory premises and transferred to a part of the country where progressive rural and agricultural development is taking place, preferably in the Dujaila area or one of the related schemes. [1]

(5) As the demand for rural schools increases, further training colleges for rural teachers should be established in close association with one or other of the progressive land settlement schemes.

Houses for Teachers. Alongside attempts to improve the training of teachers who have had a sounder educational background, it

[1] This recommendation concerning the entry qualification for rural teachers' training colleges must be read in conjunction with a later suggestion about the need for 'Intermediate Rural Life Schools'. The over-academic curriculum of the existing type of intermediate school is completely unsuitable for students who are ultimately to work and live in the rural areas. It is most desirable, therefore, that early attention should be given to the establishment of the newly conceived 'Intermediate Rural Life Schools' of the type later discussed, so that some of the future rural teacher trainees may be drawn from such realistic schools. Later, although this is beyond the scope of this study, it is to be hoped that there will be 'Secondary Rural Life Schools' from which future rural teacher trainees can also be drawn.

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

will be necessary to consider improved arrangements for the housing of teachers, especially in the rural areas. Because of the limited housing facilities in many of the villages, the majority of the teachers in the rural areas live under most unsatisfactory domestic conditions. Some live in the staff-rooms or school store. Others dwell in improvized buildings which are inadequate both for their personal needs and the status they should occupy in local society. It is because of circumstances of this kind that some of the teachers who work in the villages feel that they are undertaking penance, from which they will only escape when they can secure transfer to a town.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLING

The Corporate Life of the Primary School. Apart from some of the more established town schools where staffs have served in the same school for a number of years, many of the schools seem to lack that corporate life which is essential to the success of any school community. This is partly due to the fact that, because of unsatisfactory living conditions outside the larger centres of population, many teachers stay in the rural schools for only very short periods. They hardly get to know their pupils as individuals and do not stay long enough to assimilate the life of the surrounding community or to influence it. These conditions, when remedied by the provision of teachers' houses, possibly accompanied by 'rural teachers' allowances', will do much to improve the quality of the school as a community.

Greater Freedom for Teachers. As the teaching profession becomes better trained and housed, it is to be expected that they will be allowed greater freedom in the preparation of their own programmes of study and activity. Complaints are frequently made that, because the existing programmes of study are centrally prepared and prescribed, they restrict the freedom of the teachers. This is only partly true because, although the primary school programme is overloaded and does not provide for sufficient differentiation either as between urban and rural schools or as between the sexes, it is not perhaps so illiberal in conception as some of those who interpret it.

Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that the time will come when, with a better qualified primary school teaching cadre, it will be possible for the Ministry of Education to abandon centrally prescribed syllabuses in favour of something in the way of 'A Programme of Suggestions for Teachers'. If such a programme

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

were issued and each school required to produce its own schemes of work based generally on the suggestions, this would help to promote school programmes more related to the needs of the schools in their local environment. Such an arrangement would throw greater responsibility on the teachers themselves and would promote greater educational thought and experiment in place of the all-too rigid adherence to existing syllabuses. 000

If the Ministry of Education feel that they cannot go so far in granting freedom to the schools to prepare their own schemes of work, an approach to greater local freedom in this direction would be achieved if the task of preparing programmes could be delegated to a committee of teachers in each province who would prepare provincial programmes of study for approval by the Ministry.

Courses for Serving Teachers. Whether or not arrangements can be made for teachers to get together to prepare provincial programmes of study, there is a great need for continuous provision of courses for serving teachers. This applies more particularly to the rural teachers, many of whom live in conditions of great isolation and need that stimulus to thought and those wider professional contacts that they cannot have in their immediate locality. 875

AN APPROACH TO A NEW STRUCTURE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Two Stages of Schooling for All. As the quality of the teachers and an accompanying greater degree of freedom grow, it is probable that it will be found that the existing structure of primary education, namely six years of schooling for all in one school, does not meet all the educational needs of the children. At the present time the primary schools, with their great variation in age groups, are trying to perform two functions. They both initiate young children into the business of schooling and, because most of the pupils leave at an early age and undergo no period of secondary education, are also expected to give the older pupils some preparation for adult life. This is certainly the intention of the agricultural primary schools which some educators hope will become the model of the village school of the future. 871

It is not really possible to undertake both tasks in the one school. It is suggested, therefore, that the Ministry of Education and the proposed National Council of Education should begin to give some thought to a future alteration of the structure of primary education on the following lines: 872

(1) The first stage of education should last six years and, especially in the lower classes, should continue the activity techniques

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

872 of the kindergarten schools. This would mean that young children would be receiving education of a type more related to their growing needs. If this could be accompanied by an abandonment of the existing primary school examinations, and the children promoted year by year instead of some of them repeating their work for another year, the Iraqi primary school would certainly develop into a freer and more valid educational institution for young children.

(2) After this first stage of education, children would then automatically proceed at the age of eleven or twelve to a common second stage school or intermediate school, which should differ radically from the existing academic intermediate schools. These second stage or newly conceived intermediate schools would need to be of two types. In the villages there should be 'Intermediate Rural Life Schools' of the type recommended by the Monroe Commission. In the towns they should be schools in which a technical bias related to local industries and pursuits is included.

The Intermediate Rural Life School and Fundamental Education. If the present experimental agricultural primary schools develop the activities of their upper forms along sound and realistic lines, the Intermediate Rural Life Schools, when the time comes for them to be established, will have much to learn from their achievements.

The Intermediate Rural Life Schools should not, however, be regarded simply as schools for children. With better qualified teachers from the new or remodelled rural teachers' training colleges, and ample land and agricultural equipment, they should be designed also to serve as fundamental education centres both for the education of illiterate adults and as a means of providing further education in agriculture, health and child care. They would thus become realistic community centres designed both to serve those who have left school and to provide education in the processes of better living for those who have had no previous schooling.

A Pilot Project for an Intermediate Rural Life School. Application might also be made to Unesco for technical assistance towards the establishment of an Intermediate Rural Life School which would also serve as an experimental fundamental education centre. If such a pilot project could be established on the site of the Dujaila Land Settlement Scheme, or one of the related projects, it would serve a useful present purpose and provide invaluable material for use in connexion with future educational and social developments.

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES IN PREPARATION FOR ULTIMATE LARGE-SCALE PROVISION OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Nothing has so far been said in this study about the final achievement of the ultimate goal—the establishment of universal compulsory education throughout Iraq. The reasons for this are obvious. Until most of the obstacles, and particularly that deeply entrenched impediment of the land tenure system, outlined in the fourth chapter of this study have been solved, there is no prospect whatever of compulsory education for all being considered as a practical possibility.

By the time that the combined short-term and long-term policies of educational development outlined are well on the way, however, it is to be expected that Iraq will be in a position where successive governments will have removed the most formidable of these economic, political and social obstacles. Then will be the time for the Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the Provincial Education Committees, to make a real drive for the completion of compulsory education.

But it must be emphasized that, in a country with the great regional variations of Iraq, it would never be possible for the Ministry of Education alone to attempt to promote a national scheme of compulsory education. This is why it is important that Provincial Education Committees should be established as soon as possible, so that they may get into their working stride in time to undertake their share of the task of establishing machinery for the wholesale extension of compulsory education. Then, when general economic, political and social conditions have sufficiently advanced, will be the time for the Government to pass a Universal Compulsory Education Law under which every Provincial Education Committee would be required, within a specified time, to prepare compulsory education development plans. Under such a law each Provincial Education Committee would be required to submit to the Ministry of Education a comprehensive plan showing the educational needs of every town and village in the province, existing educational provision, and additional schools necessary to provide for all the children of compulsory school age, together with estimated costs of providing the necessary schools. When these development plans have been prepared, and modified after consideration by the Ministry of Education according to general principles laid down by the National Council of Education, it would then be possible for the Ministry of Education to specify the number of years within which the completion of provision for compulsory education should be made throughout the length and breadth of Iraq.

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN IRAQ

The time for the preparation of comprehensive compulsory education development plans for all the provinces of Iraq has, of course, not yet arrived. Nevertheless, it would serve a most useful purpose if two of the more outstanding Provincial Directors of Education, one in the north and the other in the south, could be requested to prepare such plans now. Two such draft plans, intelligently prepared and accompanied by information about social conditions and parental attitudes in each town and village in the two provinces, would be valuable in two ways. They would demonstrate the action which would have to be taken and the financial implications involved in completing the full complement of primary schools in certain towns and villages, so that these places could be declared compulsory education areas within a few years. They would serve as realistic 'model proposals' which, when approved by the Ministry of Education, could be issued to every province to illustrate in a practical way what could be done within the next few years along the lines already indicated under the heading 'The Declaration of Compulsory Education Areas'. The Ministry of Education and the two selected Provincial Directors of Education might, in the preparation of these plans, welcome advice from administrators who had faced similar problems in recent years. Such advice might take the form of technical assistance given by an administrator from a young country where the application of compulsory education is comparatively recent. It is estimated that the preparation of these model plans would take about six months.

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED POLICY

It now remains for the practicability of these suggestions to be considered by those concerned. To that end, this study concludes with the following summary of this short-term and long-term policy which, if all or part of it could be put into operation, might contribute towards realistic progress in the direction of universal compulsory education.

SHORT-TERM POLICY

(1) *Coping with Existing Demands.* A vigorous effort should be made to provide primary schools for the children who at present cannot be accommodated. Provincial Directors of

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

Education should submit to the Ministry of Education data showing the number of additional schools and teachers now needed. Immediate needs should be financed by a special allocation from the central budget; teachers should be provided partly by abandoning uneconomic rented premises, and partly by 'stepping up' teacher training; premises should be provided by voluntary means in small communities, and consideration given to local public loans for school building in large towns.

(2) *Reform of the Central Administration.* The conception of the Minister of Education as a trustee of the public educational interest should be fostered. This, combined with the creation of a National Council of Education established by law with rights of its own, should be considered as an important means of ensuring that continuity of policy without which consistent educational advance will be difficult. Administrative detail should be transferred from the Ministry of Education to the provincial education offices so that the Ministry may be free to concentrate on major issues of educational policy and development.

(3) *The Creation of Local Education Authorities.* As a means of encouraging further local interest in the development of primary education, promoting local taxation for educational purposes and providing machinery for the ultimate establishment of compulsory education, Provincial Education Committees should be established.

(4) *Financing the New Educational Arrangements.* When Provincial Education Committees with local taxation powers have been established, primary education should be financed partly through the national budget and partly from local sources. A Grants System, operating in such a way as to provide incentive to increased local financing of primary education, should be devised. An attempt should be made to secure an allocation from the Capital Works Budget for the financing of school building. Provincial Education Committees should be given power to devote some of the proceeds from local taxes to material inducements to school attendance.

(5) *The Declaration of Compulsory Education Areas.* Although the declaration and enforcement of compulsory education in whole provinces or large towns cannot at present be contemplated, the Ministry of Education should direct Provincial Education Committees to complete the provision of primary schools in the smaller towns and some of the villages so that compulsory education may be declared in certain areas within a few years. School Attendance Officers should be appointed

3: Clark S-5 (1950) 1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

ooo to assist and enforce school attendance in such towns and villages.

(6) *The Establishment of a Pilot Project in Tribal Education.* An attempt should be made to gain actual experience of the educational problems and techniques involved in tribal education. Unesco might be asked whether assistance could be given in establishing a Pilot Project in Tribal Education in Iraq.

LONG-TERM POLICY

(7) *Improving the Quality of the Teacher.* The Ministry of Education should give consideration to an improved policy of training teachers, which would include the general requirement of a complete secondary education before training, the conversion of existing one-year post secondary school training courses into full professional courses, and the inclusion of handicraft and rural science in all programmes of study. Rural teacher training institutions should be considerably improved, and new training colleges established in association with land and settlement schemes. Teachers' houses should be provided, especially in the villages.

(8) *Improving the Quality of Primary Schooling.* Living conditions of rural teachers should be improved so that they are encouraged to remain longer in the villages and promote more corporate life in the schools. Teachers, as their quality improves, should be allowed greater freedom in the preparation of their own schemes of work. The preparation of programmes of study should at any rate be decentralized. Courses for serving teachers, especially for those living in isolated villages, should be encouraged.

(9) *An Approach to a New Structure of Primary Education.* Consideration should be given to the reorientation of primary education into two stages. The first stage should be six years of simpler primary schooling, to which should be added kindergarten techniques. The second stage should develop into two kinds of newly conceived intermediate schools, urban schools including a technical bias and rural schools developing into Intermediate Rural Life Schools. The Intermediate Rural Life School should serve a dual purpose and include the provision of fundamental education for illiterate adults. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a pilot project for an Intermediate Rural Life School.

(10) *Development Schemes in Preparation for Ultimate Large-Scale Provision*

3: Clark S-5 (1950)1951 MH1 Iraq MH1

of Compulsory Education. Universal compulsory education is never likely to be established in Iraq until the serious economic, political and social obstacles outlined in Chapter Four are wholly or partly solved. This applies particularly to the problem of land tenure. Ultimately the Provincial Education Committees will provide the machinery for preparing and implementing wholesale schemes of compulsory education. For this reason it is important that the Provincial Education Committees should be established forthwith. Model Compulsory Education Development Plans should be prepared in two selected provinces, one in the north and the other in the south of Iraq, realistic advice could thus be given as to the practical steps needing to be taken in connexion with the declaration, within the next few years, of compulsory education in certain areas in all provinces.

3: Clark S-5 (1966) 1951 Mill Iraq Mill

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